

L E T T E R S

FROM THE

COUNTESS DE SANCERRE.

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ант. Молч

COUNTES DE SANCERRE

L E T T E R S
FROM THE
COUNTESS DE SANCERRE,
TO
COUNT DE NANCE,
HER FRIEND.

BY MADAM RICCOBONI.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

VOLUME I.

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J E T H J

MONTE

COUNTES DE SINCERRE

o t

COUNT DE NANCY



MONTE EST MOLT DEDICAT

ALBUM

MONTE

EST MOLT DEDICAT

.VOLTAIRE'S
IV

TO MR. GARRICK.

I Hear you quite hither—hush—hush,
I say. Be composed ; be calm ;
don't put yourself in such a passion.—
*How ! what ! my name prefixed to a con-
founded French pamphlet, and be calm !—*

Not so loud, Sir; if you please ; why
should you be angry, before you know whe-
ther the subject be worth your resentment ?
Of what are you so very apprehensive ? Of
compliments and commendations ? Oh,
 fie ! Friendship never employs the lan-
guage of flattery. Shall I go to repeat,
after all the world, that the goodness of
your heart acquires you as many friends, as
the superiority of your genius and talents
begets you admirers ? Not I, indeed. I
leave that to others.

But,

But, why, then, dedicate your letters to Me? Patience, and I will tell you. To give you, Sir, a public proof of my sincere esteem; of my affectionate, most affectionate, friendship: to give you thanks for your reciprocal inclination to cultivate it; and perhaps also to please my own vanity. That self-love, which lies lurking in our hearts, often influences our actions, when we are least aware of it.

If my performance should be thought cold and insipid, it will of course be thrown aside, and condemned to be transferred from bookseller to bookseller, as mere stock in trade, to posterity. By good luck, however, some future owner may possibly brush off the dust; and, at seeing your name, be surprised to find the whole edition on his hands. How's this? will

he say, the author a friend to the celebrated GARRICK! so much caressed in his own country, and admired throughout all Europe! Who could have imagined him to have been connected with a block-head? Nothing however is impossible; and yet, tho' the work may not be capital, there must be some merit in it, if the writer was a friend of Mr. GARRICK.

This consideration will induce him to read it; and, it is probable that, in order to shew he has a better taste than his ancestors, he will admire it, puff it off, and bring it into fashion; so that, two or three hundred years hence, I may be indebted to you for the success of SANCERRE'S LETTERS, and even the reputation of being a tolerable writer: shew yourself, then, discreet and moderate; don't make a great

a great quarrel of it, nor write to me in the first emotions of passion; stay, till you have forgiven me this new offence: consider, you have been chiding me for these six months past at least. Adieu, my most agreeable and affectionate friend; I remain, with all those sentiments your merit inspires and must ever preserve,

Your sincere friend,
MARIE RICCOBONI,

A thousand compliments to your charming consort; whom, be pleased to assure, I shall never, never forget.

LET-

LETTERS

OF THE

COUNTESS DE SANCERRE.

LETTER I.

Paris, Monday, Nov. 2, 17—

I Expected your answer with impatience; thinking it would bring me information of an happy change in the dispositions of that *worthy relation*, who shews so much *politeness* and *obstinacy* in his endeavours to ruin your sister. Indeed, my dear Count, I am very angry with him; this disagreeable and interesting business hath already kept you the whole autumn in Brittany, and perhaps

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may

may detain you all the winter. You owe your best advice to your sister, and your good offices to your nephews: this sacrifice of your time and pleasures is truly generous; I approve of it; though it prevents my seeing you.

I say this to myself with regret and even chagrin; having never so eagerly desired your company. And yet, if you ask me why I profess I cannot tell. I have no business on my hands; am in no wise embarrassed, at least that I know; I perceive, nevertheless, that you could be useful to me; ah! when indeed can a true friend be useless?

The Marquis de Montalais is at length restored to his acquaintance, who ardently wished his return. M. and Madam de Comminges, the Count de Piennes,

and

Countess de SANCERRE. 3

and Madam de Martigues, have made entertainments on his arrival; and I doubt not he is deserving of those sentiments he inspires. Adieu. Give my most affectionate compliments to your amiable sister, and tell her she ought to be very well satisfied with me. I deny myself the pleasure of writing to her, because I would not interrupt her present moments of agreeable leisure.

LETTER II.

I SHALL trust you with a little secret, that hath given rise here to great hopes. M. de Meri, who was so fully determined to marry Madam de Miranda to his slovenly pupil, begins to recede from the prepossession he hath so long entertained for him. The friends of the Count de Termes get about the good old man, and ask why he will persist in afflicting his beloved neice? They humour, and solicit him; in the mean time, the Chevalier de Termes sees, amuses, and pleases him; every thing seems in a fair way for the completion of the wishes of two very estimable persons. Madam de Martigues gives herself a world of trouble,

and

and the Count de Piennes is interested greatly, in the affair. Termes himself runs backwards and forwards, is pleased and vexed, hopes and fears, laughs and cries, twenty times in a day. So sincere a friend and affectionate a lover, affects and interests every one in his favour; all are engaged to wish his happiness. My attachment to Madam de Miranda fixes my attention upon an event, on which her fortune and felicity depend.

The prospect of this marriage gives much pleasure to Count de Piennes. If once one of the three *charming widows*, says he, submits again to the yoke, the two others will certainly follow her example; Madam de Martigues will come to a determination, and her hand and heart will at last be mine. The success

of Count de Piennes in this particular would give a real satisfaction to all his friends ; if Madam de Martigues would take my advice, she would marry him and make him happy. But, with regard to my entering into new engagements, my friend, I think less of it now than ever.

The Marquis de Montalais, is arrived ; but I told you that before. Do you hear any thing of Madam du Lugei ? I shall surprize you ; we have quarrelled, yes, downright quarrelled. I know not why that woman takes upon her to regulate my conduct and choose my friends : tired out with her lectures, therefore, I return no more of her tedious and disagreeable visits. I will give you leave, my dear Count, to chide me a little now and then ; but

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but don't you set up for an arbiter between us, and above all don't take it into your head to reconcile us. Adieu.
I have executed all your commissions.

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LETTER III.

YES, I frequently see the Marquis de Montalais, I sup with him almost every evening. My God ! you are in the right ; *that man is an enchanter* ; he engages, amuses, seduces every body ; he hath reanimated our pleasures, and is the delight of our little society. Entreated, preferred, caressed, he preserves, notwithstanding, that modesty by which he is so advantageously distinguished ; a rare quality in a man that's agreeable ; and not only rare, but very possibly dangerous.

Madam de Martigues cannot conceive how she can have survived six months without seeing M. de Montalais ; she is
atten-

attentive to, admires, and applauds every thing he says ; is desirous all the world should be charmed with his conversation ; and is seriously angry when any body presumes to differ from him. The Count de Piennes views him in the same light, and says as she does : the most agreeable reception, the most flattering encomiums lavished on the Marquis, give not the least umbrage to a lover, at once jealous and unhappy ! Does not this appear to you very singular and astonishing ?

The person, you mention with so much warmth, is entirely unknown to me. I was ignorant that my mother had a relation married in Brittany, and am persuad-ed she herself knew nothing of it.

If Madam de Kerlanes is of the house of Estelan, a family dear to me on many accounts,

accounts, I am ready to fulfil your wishes; and if two thousand *louis* will facilitate the settlement of Mademoiselle de Kerlanes, I consent with all my heart, to give her that sum.

But what a narrative have you given me of this affair? Nothing can be more false; I am not in possession of the family estate of the house of Estelan; it was transferred to other hands long before I was born. It is true, the last Count of that name left me the fortune he brought from Martinico; but the Marshal de Tende did not *influence* him to appoint me his *universal legatee*: the great estate of M. d'Estelan did not *form the bonds* which united me to the Marshal's nephew. That affectionate relation designed me for M. de Sancerre at a time when

when my fortune was very moderate, and I had no prospect of so considerable an inheritance. I owe an entire justification to the memory of the Marshal de Tende; whose generous friendship for me made him desirous to see me his neice. He wished for my happiness, and imagined he had taken the proper means to secure it. The ill success of his endeavours hath not in the least diminished my gratitude; and I shall ever recollect with sorrow, that it was not in my power to convince him of it.

Undeceive Madam de Kerlanes, therefore, undeceive her, I beg of you. My mother's brother voluntarily appointed me his heiress; I shall inform you of his motives for disinheriting his son. No, I protest to you that nobody
influenced

influenced him to sign that act of resentment ; which was just in his opinion, though rash in mine. As a relation to Madam de Kerlanes, I conceive I owe her nothing ; but as being more highly favoured by fortune, I think I owe her my assistance, and shall take a pleasure in obliging her. Madam de Mariadek may spare her pressing solicitations : indigence is with me the strongest recommendation. I imagined the sister of the Count de Nancé knew me well enough to think so.

Madam de Mitanda is just going out, she desires me to thank you for your affectionate wishes. Her hopes increase every moment. Madam de Themines is just come in, gay, charming and beautiful ; she has an hundred things to tell you ;

you; so let her write them down and I'll inclose her gazette in my letter. Adieu, my friend: I am melancholy, and know not why. The Marquis de Montalais is at Versailles, so that I cannot execute your commission with regard to him.

LET-

LETTER IV.

So! you had just received, I find, a letter from Madam du Lugei when you last wrote to me. The politeness of your expressions could not hide the spirit which dictated them, nor efface the asperity of my censorious relation. But I must begin with telling you, that I utterly despise that kind of *prudence* on which that lady piques herself; every species of affectionation is odious to me. I will reply to your observations, however, just as if the Marchioness du Lugei had not prevailed on you to communicate hers.

You are right in the censure you pass on the levity of my friend Madam de Martigues; exact in her morals as inconsiderate in

in her behaviour, she neglects, perhaps, too much to secure every body's good opinion : she disdains to lay herself under any restraint, to prevent the malicious constructions which may be put on her discourse, or the false conjectures which her conduct may sometimes seem to give room for. Her notions are frequently wild and foolish ; she is too lively, too much bent on doing exactly what she likes, or what affords her amusement. Thus, for example, her whim of making trial of Count de Piennes has lasted too long. A marriage agreed on, delayed, broke off ; quarrels, reconciliations ; a lover dismissed, recalled, admitted, and rejected half a score times in two years ; all this is certainly very odd ; this lover still remains attached to her, bears with her *caprices* ;

can a man thus ill treated support it with patience? This affronting question was certainly suggested by Madam du Lugei; she is the only person who admires the *patience* of a man, who in fact has none at all; who is perpetually complaining, continually tormenting the friends and relations of Madam de Martigues; who engages every body he meets with to speak for him, and perhaps defers by his excessive importunity, the moment that might be favourable to his wishes.

Indeed, my dear Count, Madam de Martigues is cruelly injured by any one who dares to suspect her of the least criminal weakness; satisfied with the testimony of her own heart, with the profound respect of her lover, and with the esteem

esteem of her friends, she may easily console herself, for having raised *doubts, fears, and disquieting ideas* in the mind of the Marchioness du Lugei. This lady is so full of pretensions, that she would have the whole world employed as she would direct. The absurdity of Madam de Martigues *hurts* her, does she say? No, no. It is not *that* which hurts her. She envies her the numerous circle, which her amiable disposition and agreeable conversation bring about her.—But I am interrupted, it is she: it is this *dangerous companion*; she, whom I prefer to all others. We are going out together.—I shall finish my letter after supper.

Midnight.

Not to return, my dear Count, to a disagreeable subject, I would put an end

to it at once, and only repeat to you what I have said an hundred times to Madam du Lugei. The opinion of others shall never govern my sentiments: my own heart is to me the supreme judge. If Madam de Martigues is so unhappy as to be the subject of suspicions, I shall be truly sorry for it, I know not any thing that will console me in such a circumstance; but I shall not cease therefore to visit assiduously my friend: on the contrary, I had rather run the risk of sharing an unjust censure, than to give credit to it, or propagate it, by keeping at a distance. It would not be the first time in my life that, sacrificing my interest to my principles, I have been the object of the mistaken censure of those sort of people, whose attention is always fixed

fixed on the business of others. How many idle spectators do we daily hear determine rashly on what they see, and still more rashly on what they do not see.

At a time when every one was against me ; when I passed both at city and court, as proud, captious and insolent ; for a melancholy, capricious, insusceptible and haughty woman ; incapable of living with the best-tempered of husbands, by whom I was *loved* and *adored* ! Madam de Martigues was the only person who judged favourably of me. Her friendship for me gave her penetration ; she discovered in me such qualities, as those who did not know me, ventured to deny me. She often came to share my retirement, and quitted, for my sake, that world she so much loved. She procured

me friends, and informed all hers that I underwent some secret inquietudes. She prevailed on Madam de Miranda to come to live with me : she boldly defended my understanding, my heart, and my character ; and shall I behave less generously towards her ? No, most assuredly I will not. Not that I am in a situation to display my gratitude to her ; that I hope will never be. Excepting the Marchioness du Lugei, nobody forms any injurious *doubts* concerning the conduct of Madam de Martigues, and I can safely visit my friend without disagreeable *apprehensions*, to poison the delight I take in her company. The Marquis de Montalais returns to-morrow, and will sup here ; when I will speak to him of the person you have taken under your protection : and

and as the Marquis is very obliging, I am certain of the success of my negotiation. You ask me what *he says*, and how *he behaves*? Why, he speaks well and behaves better; every body admires, every body approves him. He is indeed a little thoughtful; but so he was last winter. Madam de Martigues pretends to know the reason of it. For the first time in her life, she sits still and holds her tongue; she is, in this, impenetrable; not but that the keeping this secret costs her a good deal; she is greatly taken up with it; and even without being asked, cries out, *I won't tell you.*

Madam de Miranda and I are constantly looking out for some defects in this amiable Marquis: the Count de Piennes maintains that his cousin is perfect.

Perfect cries Madam de Miranda; we cannot suffer that; never shall we admit that any man can be perfect. We are both intent on our examination of the Marquis, and shall communicate to you our discoveries. His figure is really fine, graceful and noble: it is best for us to resolve not to attack him here! But his understanding must be very acute, if he is able to conceal from us the weakness of his heart. Adieu, my dear Count.— What a letter! Is it possible I can have written all this!

LET-

L E T T E R V.

YOU are doubtless in the right. If one is not naturally of a *capricious* and *uneven* temper, one ought to know the principle of all one's sentiments; one ought not to say, *I am melancholy, and know not why.*

But, my friend, one may become by habit what one is not by nature. I am grown quite ill-humoured; positively ill-humoured; I am tired of company, frightened at solitude, and displeased with every thing.

You ask me what it is that can *disturb* the calm of my soul? Really nothing. But then its calm is as dreadful as a tempest; at least so it seems to me. The soul

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requires either to be agitated with acute pains, or exquisite pleasures. If the sense of the one, or the charm of the other, press not the springs of action, its slow and feeble emotions leave us in a state of languor and inactivity. Destitute of inclinations and desires, we barely exist; but do not enjoy our existence. Every object becomes indifferent to us, and this indifference begets that kind of anxiety which, of all the evils of life, is the most insupportable.

Whose gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades ev'ry flow'r, and darkens ev'ry green.

Pope's Eloisa to Abelard.

I have been these three days at Nouilli :
where my sister does not help to brighten
up my reflections : because she was born

two

two and twenty years before me. She affects to make me adopt her opinions ; but when she begins to lecture I fall asleep. Madam de Martigues came to enquire after me yesterday : she writes me word that the Marquis de Montalais hath disappeared : nobody sees him, meets with him, or knows where to find him. She talks a deal of nonsense on this subject. She has a mind to *inform me* ; to *trust me* ; not that any thing has *been said*, but she *guessed* it : to be sure nothing engages her *to silence* ; she has *promised*, however, to say nothing about it ; but to *me*, to *bide* it from *me*. And then she protests she will not *speak a word of the matter*. You see the secret is just ready to come out. Is it true that the Marchioness

ness de Montalais is ugly ? So very ugly ?
Good God, what an odd match !

You desired our verses ; I have therefore sent them ; but take care what judgment you pass on them : for if you think them wretched, we shall hardly allow you to have common sense ; and if you praise them, Madam de Martigues will say, " Poor Count ! the country hath already spoiled his taste." Adieu.

L E T T E R VI.

I HAVE just now partook of a most exquisite pleasure: Madam de Miranda is at length reconciled to her mother's wealthy brother. He dined here, and desired the Count de Termes might be invited. Every thing is agreed on and settled. The honest, the worthy M. de Meri gives his neice thirty thousand livres per annum, down; and secures her two thirds of his effects at his death. I shall not however lose the pleasure of her company; Termes consents to accommodate himself in the pavillion, which used to be occupied by M. de Sancerre: it is large and may easily be divided into two commodious apartments. As I positively do not mean

mean to change my condition, all that side of the house is useless to me.

The wedding is fixed for the middle of next month. The old lady de Termes is delighted with the match; of which she is vastly desirous. She gives nothing indeed to her grandson, but she interferes in every thing; and what with teasing the mercers, plaguing the jewelers, and quarrelling with the work-people, in which it is by no means impossible to disoblige five or six of her relations, she is mightily pleased and amuses herself very well.

M. de Montalais agrees to receive the young officer you recommended; and has probably written to you on that head. Well, without exaggeration, his wife is odiously ugly. I was absolutely on the point

point of screaming out, at sight of her picture yesterday at Madam de Comminges. It must be confessed that parents are sometimes very cruel! To compel so amiable a man to marry such an ugly rich heiress against his will! And yet he behaves to her with so much respect that she seems to have been the object of his choice.

That woman is happy, my dear Count, she is truly happy. How different hath been my fate to hers, though full as rich, younger and much more obliged in person to nature! But I will not burthen my mind with these reflections. They really afflict me. Adieu.

LETTER VII.

YOU desire me to communicate our remarks on the Marquis de Montalais; and this request you enforce with an earnestness that surprizes me. To tell you the truth we have as yet made but little progress in our observations. Madam de Miranda is too much taken up, in receiving the congratulations of her friends, in sharing the joy, and partaking the transports of her passionate lover, to be able to pay attention to any thing else. For my own part, whose heart is unmoved, and remains an unaffected spectator in the midst of a society, agitated by so many various interests, I may perhaps be qualified to judge without partiality

tiality of the several individuals who compose it. I think exactly the same of M. de Montalais as I thought last winter. He is a dangerous man. One in whom the most uncommon qualities of mind are united to a fine figure; whose delicacy of sentiments hath never been debased by gross and transitory passions, by vicious and libertine attachments, capable of destroying the very springs of sensibility; one who so well discharges his duty, displays so much goodness and humanity; who is justly distinguished in public, so dear to his friends and relations.—Yes, the Marquis de Montalais, I think a dangerous man. His temper is so even; he hath understanding, abilities, vivacity; a voice so sweet; such fine hair! So noble a mien, and a smile

so charming.—O, my friend, indeed a woman of susceptibility ought to shut her door against so dangerous an intruder; mine, perhaps, would not be open to him, if he were single.

But after all, who knows if these seductive external accomplishments do not cover a deceitful mind, a cunning head and cruel heart! I have been taught, by early and woful experience, to distrust even characters of the most established reputation. I have examined into some of these admired personages, and found them very little worthy of my esteem: you perhaps are the only one whose sentiments, always consistent with your conduct, never gave me reason to change the opinion first given me of your disposition and character.

I don't

I don't understand why you still keep talking to me of the designs of Madam de Valencé ; “ her nephew is *rich, good-natured, sensible, charming!*” Well and what then ? What is all this to me ? I shall have nothing to say to him. My liberty is dear to me, even more dear to me than ever : I prize it, I delight in it ; it makes me happy.—*Happy !* And am I then happy ?—For the first time in my life, my friend, I experience that it is in the power of the most vague and unsettled desires to throw disgust on pleasures we actually possess.

There is Madam de Miranda, for instance, beautiful as an angel, and tender as Astrea ; yet is she negligently reclined on her cushion. I proposed her writing to you. *I can't*, says she. Shall I write

for you? *Ay, do.* What shall I say to him? *Ob, any thing you please.* Now it pleases me to give you an assurance of her indolence and friendship.

Termes is at Chantilly with Comminges, Themines and the Marquis de Montalais; you may guess the cause of Madam de Miranda's indolence; for these two days our society has been insupportable. Madam de Martigues coughs, the Count de Piennes hobbles, Madam de Themines ruminates, my sister grumbles, her husband bawls, Saint Maigrin schemes, his brother ogles, the old Marshal tells stories, his neice pouts, Duplessis lies, Miranda yawns, and I fall asleep.

L E T T E R VIII.

YOU are surprised, greatly surprised at some expressions in my letters; and still more surprised at my having said, in speaking of the Marchioness de Montalais, that *my lot has been very different from hers*. No husband, you think, could have a more tender regard for his wife than the Count de Sancerre; and if an inconceivable antipathy had not blinded me to his merit, I should never have preferred my residence at Mondelis to the pleasure of making happy an amiable man, by whom I was passionately loved.

Loved! I loved! passionately loved! Alas, my dear Count, you are far from being able to conceive how much this re-

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proach afflicts me: what a deep, though concealed, wound it may cause again to open! Time, friendship, dissipation, and a small portion of philosophy have restored my serenity of mind; but without effacing the marks of those cruel stabs my heart received during the course of that *union*, which appeared so happily designed.

Have you found me these four years past, uneven or capricious, in my temper? Am I incapable of tenderness, gratitude and affection? Is my disposition subject to change? Have you perceived any inconstancy in my conduct, or diversity in my inclinations? Why then should the Count de Sancerre alone have experienced my caprices? Ought not my behaviour with regard to others, to have given

given you some cause for reflection; to have made you discover a striking contrariety between my natural way of thinking and acting, and that disposition which the world hath been pleased to impute to me? You *love* and *esteem* me, and yet your prejudices still subsist! You believe that I, *who am attentive to the happiness of every one about me*, could yet make my husband *miserable*! On what account then do I possess your esteem?

You were attached to M. de Sancerre; when he was wounded, you did the office of a generous friend; you even carried him off the field of battle; and if he could then have spoke, I doubt not, having no longer any motive for disguise, the truth would for once have

escaped his lips. He would have ventured, perhaps, in his dying moments to have trusted you with the secret, and have assured you of the extreme confession of a woman whom he himself accused of so much inflexibility.

You did not know M. de Sancerre, no, my dear Count, you did not know him. Is it in camps, at courts, or in the midst of public assemblies, that we can penetrate the characters, and judge of the hearts, of mankind? If you were required to give a faithful picture of this friend; what would be the distinguishing strokes you would make use of? "Sancerre," you would say, "was bold and fearless; he was fond of the wars, and behaved well in them; liberal in his expences, he lived nobly; knew how to

“ render himself agreeable to his master,
“ and did not neglect the improvement of
“ his fortune. I was left his executor and
“ found his affairs in good order, and his
“ estates augmented by his economy.”

What an elogium, my friend! To the disgrace of modern manners, weak as M. de Sancerre was, few of his equals deserve the like. But is a man a good man, merely because he is not grossly wicked? Is it enough for a man not to be in every respect shocking, to appear estimable in the eyes of a delicate and prudent woman?

I have always avoided entering with you into useless particulars. The friendship you had for M. de Sancerre ought to have kept you at a distance from his widow. The office he imposed on you

obliged you to see her ; you was soon pleased to cultivate her acquaintance, which perhaps you would not otherwise have sought. I respected the memory of M. de Sancerre, and did not offer to remove your prejudices against me ; I am averfe indeed even now to remove them : but of this be assured, that *no groundless caprice made me prefer my residence at Mondelis to the house of my husband.* His interest, the integrity of my own heart, a decent pride, and the fear of not being always mistress of myself, at length induced me to live at a distance from an ungrateful man, who perhaps was still dear to me, notwithstanding the knowledge I had of his disposition and character. Don't exclaim, or recollect the idle talk of the multitude : remember that

that I am sincere. Yes, I loved the Count de Sancerre ; my heart was entirely his. Did you but know.—But let us not talk any more of that part of my life ; the remembrance of which will be ever painful to me. Adieu. Madam de Martigues told me yesterday to chide you for something on her account ; but I have forgot what.

LET-

LETTER IX.

I AM going at last to communicate to you our remarks on the Marquis de Montalais. Every body cries up his *good-nature*, his *even temper*, and his *philosophy*, and yet in the first place, he is not easily pleased; he is out of temper at a trifle, and, with all his philosophy, goes about pouting like a spoilt child.

I was yesterday at the opera; never was I so tired in my life: Madam de Planci was there; a most singular woman! An unit that is multiplied, however, amazingly; for she is but here, there and every where: I never go out without seeing her; and you must certainly

tainly remember that she has been to be seen a long while.

The Marquis de Montalais came into my box; when Madam de Planci made him repeated signs; on which he went to speak to her: their conversation was long and spirited; the one expressed himself with warmth, the other with vivacity. Madam de Planci appeared in raptures, and when the Marquis returned he looked highly delighted. I took it into my head to tell him that Madam de Planci did not dress her head well, and that he ought to tell her of it. You never saw a man so disconcerted in your life; in the mean while he blushed, had not a word to say for himself, but sat motionless. On going out, I took the hand of the Chevalier de Nemond, the Marquis giving his

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to Madam de Martigues; to whom I overheard him say, I am unfortunate, *very unfortunate* indeed! He hardly pronounced ten words for the remainder of the evening, but spoiled our play, and hardly knew what he was about at table. What an unaccountable whim was this, taken against me! He could not forgive me for having censured the taste of Madam de Planci, or the awkwardness of her women.

No, no, the Marquis de Montalais has not all the merit which Madam de Martigues pretends to find in him. He has not indeed. He, master of his passions! Not to be able to hide his confusion and concern! Surely this betrays a weakness in a soul so truly noble and superior! Besides, I hate all deceit. Why should he

arm

arm himself with an affected indifference? Is it an excess of vanity that induces him to appear insusceptible of passion? Does he put on his philosophy by way of preservative against his accomplishments? Truly, I imagine it is his fear of being beloved, followed and teased, that makes him so unhappy, so very unhappy! Well, I was very near being deceived in his character; I was on the point of contracting a most sincere esteem for him. This man,—I am sorry to say it,—but he is—he is in short just like other men.

After all, perhaps it is so much the better. Madam de Hianges said yesterday, speaking of this piece of ill humour of the Marquis, “M. de Montalais cannot lose too much of his interior good qualities in the eyes of a sensible woman who examines

examines him." She was in the right; for he will always have enough to seduce any other woman. Who have we here but the Marquis de Limeuil, returned from Spain, who is as troublesome as ever! Every body is teasing me about his regard, his constancy, his family, his expectations: whereas I mind nothing but his obstinacy: Good God, why will not people let me be quiet? I neither want Limeuil, nor any body else. Who can please me well enough at present, to merit the sacrifice of my agreeable liberty? Nobody, my friend, nobody in the world.

I have just received a letter from Madam de Kerlanes, she expresses great gratitude; perhaps too much of it. The little billet from her daughter greatly affects me; both the one and the other set
 ~~confidence~~
 a great

a great value on a small obligation. In truth, my dear Count, to confer a favour is in my opinion a certain way of procuring pleasure, and that independent of the persons obliged; their gratitude adds but little to it, nor can their ingratitude destroy it.

I have promised you *an explanation*; I remember it. Be not too urgent and I will give it you. You will communicate it to Madam de Kerlanes; her notions of the Marshal de Tende have hurt me, and I should be sorry to leave her under such a mistake. Adieu. My compliments to Madam de Mariadek: if she were not your sister, I should not forgive her detaining you so long.

LETTER X.

JUSTICE obliges me to inform you that I have put a very false construction on the conduct and sentiments of the Marquis de Montalais. Madam de Planci desired him a few days ago to settle a difficult affair between her and her brother; which being terminated agreeable to her wishes, she thanked the Marquis for the trouble he had taken. Pleased to find her so well satisfied, he returned to the box with an air of complaisance and gaiety, arising from his goodness of heart, that deceived me.

We ought to be always on our guard against a certain malignity that induces us to form conclusions without premises

-T.S.I.

and

and determinations on slight appearances. Madam de Planci appeared to me immediately as an indiscreet woman, and I thought the Marquis passionately in love with her. I was mistaken with regard to both; they indeed are ignorant of it, but I know it, and reproach myself for it.

How greatly your absence afflicts me? Why don't you return? I want to see you, and shall have occasion to consult you. One never writes all one thinks. I have not been lately in my usual state of health; I have got the vapours perhaps; that is a disease without sickness, is it not? The imagination is affected; it fixes itself constantly on one object, which is ever before our eyes; it is in vain we endeavour to drive it from our thoughts; the same idea incessantly recurs. The

least noise in the world gives an alarm, the heart is in a palpitation: we know not what we want; we would and we would not; nothing pleases us, while every thing is irksome.—Good God! that such should be my situation! I am in terrors without knowing what I fear; resembling often a timid creature who is pursued and seeks to escape; flying, running, and always thinking her pursuers at her heels.

I expect your letter with impatience; the words of a true friend, says the sage, are an healing balm to a wounded mind. I shall open mine to you with pleasure. You possess my confidence and are discreet; your friendship therefore may enlighten my steps, may save me from—What? From whom? Where lies the danger?

danger? My imagination is troubled, and my understanding confused, the effect of this cruel malady.—Alas, my dear Count, how am I altered! The objects about me appear no longer the same. My regard for you, indeed, is unchanged and unchangeable.—But here comes Madam de Martigues.

FROM MADAM DE MARTIGUES.

Yes, here am I, good day to you, Count; well, have you done your business? When do you set out on your return? When shall we see you here? Are not you very foolish to stay so long at Rennes? And what can you be doing there? How comes it you don't fly to congratulate Madam de Miranda and your friend

E 2 . Terimes?

Termes? Besides you will grow quite heavy and troublesome. Your people of business will make you as dull and insipid as themselves. But a propos about being troublesome, the Count de Piennes vows and swears that I can't be off marrying before the end of the winter. Madam de Sancerre is of the same opinion; you I know will join them; and, as for Madam de Miranda, she is for having all the world marry. Now you are to know that there are moments in which my good genius abandons me, in which I am tempted, in which Miranda's example may —— Ah! what a horrid thought come across me there! But we shall see, though I promise nothing. I stand in heed of a more striking example even than that of Madam de Sancerre. I have a great project

in view, but she knows nothing of it, nor shall you. One of these days, however, I shall make you stand in admiration at my foresight, at the extent and profundity of my views. Do they say I have too much levity. Yes, yes, I have *levity* to be sure! But you shall see, you shall see. Adieu, a thousand and a thousand affectionate compliments to Madam de Mariadek.

FROM MADAM DE SANCERRE.

So! she has scribbled over all my paper, I see; and has hardly left me room to re-assure you of my friendship.

LETTER XI.

IT was neither *indolence* nor *indifference* that have made me let a week pass without writing to you. I was not at Paris : but am no sooner arrived there than I sit down to inform you of my adventures.

On Monday last as Madam de Miranda and I were sitting by ourselves, Madam de Martigues came in, and soon after Madam de Themines. We were talking, laughing and amusing ourselves with nothing, when, all of a sudden a thought started into the head of Madam de Martigues. My dear, said she to me, I am positively weary of the world and sigh for solitude. Paris is so fatiguing : to see always the same objects ; hear the

same

same eternal round of scandal ; to spend every evening in the midst of a dull circle of ridiculous creatures, whose follies will not divert one : what an insipid uniformity ! let us at least have the satisfaction of a little variety : let us for example, go somewhere and tire out one another.

That would be a difficult matter, replied Madam de Miranda, we can never be tired with those we love. Oh, but we may, replied Madam de Martigues, let us however go and try. We four will set out privately for the estate I have lately purchased in the country, and which nobody here knows any thing of. What a piece of work will there be in looking for us, and enquiring after us ! What idle discourse this wonderful eclipse will

give rise to! What ridiculous tales will be told, and absurd histories invented, on our disappearance, to divert us by laughing at them on our return.

But how shall I manage the matter with M. de Thémirens? said the young Marchioness. Nay, nay, replied Madam de Martigues, don't you affect now to play the *fond wife*; can't you tell him you are going to Versailles? Madam de Thémirens consented, and the objections of Madam de Miranda were in like manner over-ruled; she gave into the scheme, and I suffered myself also to be seduced: the party was formed, secrecy was promised, and the next day we set out.

A pleasant house, a number of lights; and a gay apartment, inspired us with mirth; and set us laughing at our friends,

de-

describing their astonishment, and imagining the surprized and rueful physionomies they would assume on the occasion. Madam de Martigues amused us highly in taking off the Count de Piennes. There, says she, he is now at the gate disputing with my Swiss porter. How! not at home? No, Sir. Not expect her to return? No, Sir. What! neither to night, to-morrow, nor the day after? No, Sir, And not know where she is? No, Sir. 'Sdeath this is too much. No, Sir. And no Sir, goes the Swiss on to the end of the chapter. We pleased ourselves with imagining he would go to my house: nobody at home. To the houses of the rest: not the least discovery. Strange indeed! four women disappear of a sudden! Carried off, nobody knows how,

when,

when, nor where ! What could be thought of it ?

Ah ! but that poor Termes, cried Madam de Miranda, he will certainly be inconsolable, and I cannot amuse myself with the thoughts of his distress. *Pob, pob,* replied Madam de Martigues, who had an answer for every objection, *Termes is a reasonable creature and will have patience.* My husband, said Madam de Themines, will certainly have me shut up. *Well, let him, we will come and see you in the convent.* I assured her my sister, on finding me missing, would clap a seal on the door of my apartments.

So much the better, we will prosecute the covetous creature for making a false seizure of your effects. And now, said she, let us sit down, and write satirical verses on
our

our friends and ourselves ; and be sure let us not spare ourselves, that we may, with the better grace, be still more severe on our acquaintance.

This curious proposal was applauded ; and we immediately ranged ourselves round the table. Pens and paper were brought, and to study we went : one ruminating and beating time with her foot, another scratching her head, and a third not knowing where to begin. In the mean time Madam de Martigues wrote down every thing that came into her head, as if nothing could stop her pen.

In the midst of this grave occupation, we were interrupted by the noise of horses in the outer court ; mixed with the confused voices of men, forcing their way into

into the house, against the opposition of the servants. Good God ! cried Madam de Miranda, just ready to faint away at the fright, they are ruffians. I turned pale ; and Madam de Thémire hid her face. Madam de Martigues kept still writing on, making a sign with her hand for us to be silent.

The door was presently forced open, and the robbers burst into the saloon ; Thémire, the Count de Piennes, Termes, Comminges, his wife and two sisters, and the Marquis de Montalais, looking more agreeable in his riding dress than I had ever seen him before.

These were the desperadoes who had alarmed us ; and at sight of whom Madam de Martigues broke into such immoderate fits of laughter that they infected,

fected, and were reiterated by, the whole company.

It was in vain any body attempted to speak, where none were to be heard ; thus it was above an hour before we were sufficiently composed to wish each other a good evening. I complained of treachery, and Madam de Themines confessed herself guilty ; we chid her pretty roundly, but her husband defended her cause so well that she obtained her pardon ; our mirth increased, and I knew not that I ever spent an evening more agreeably in my life.

The six days, we passed in this pleasant tour, slipped away as if they had been but one. M. de Montalais is gone to meet the Marchioness at Saint Cernin, and to bring her to Paris. Good God !

how

how that man is beloved. His friends cannot support his absence ; but embrace him on his departure, and make him promise a speedy return : they will hardly consent to allow him the necessary time to take this little journey. Ah ! my dear Count, said he, to M. de Piennes, with an affectionate tone and air at parting, I have every motive to return as soon as possible; for here I leave every thing that is dear to me. He intends to be absent only about twelve days.

Your third letter is just brought me; I shall read it at Madam de Cominges', with whom I am going to sup ; having already made Madam de Thianges, whom I shall take with me, wait above a quarter of an hour. Adieu.

One

One o'clock in the morning.

Always complaining of my *indolence*. You chide me, you *fear*, you are *afraid to tell me*—and then ask me an hundred questions successively.

My friend, I will not answer them, I cannot answer them. As to the circumstances you want to be informed of, you shall be made acquainted with them speedily. Good night, I shall endeavour to get a little rest; but I know not whether I shall succeed.—So, another question started already! *And why, Madam, should you not succeed in getting rest?* Oh, my dear Count, why will you be so curious? You really begin to grow imprudent. Have I not already told you that one never writes all one thinks?

L E T -

LETTER XII.

I SHAL now fulfil my promise, in justifying Marshal de Tende, and informing you why M. d'Estelan was induced to disinherit his son. Neither my mother, nor the Marshal were capable of listening to the dictates of mercenary self-interest. You must not judge of them from what is said by a prejudiced, or misinformed woman; but from their conduct and actions.

The Count de Dammartin, being a widower at the age of fifty, and having no design to enter into new engagements himself, gave his only daughter in marriage to the Marquis de Thoré, making

over to him, by deed of gift, his whole effects except his estate at Mondelis.

Two years after this he himself fell desperately in love with the sister of Count d'Estelan ; a lady whom the mediocrity of her fortune condemned to a melancholy retirement. Her brother, ruined like herself by the loss of an important and expensive lawsuit, was on the point of going over to Martinico, whither he was invited by the governor his friend and relation ; before he went, however, he prevailed on his sister to prefer the giving her hand to Count de Dam-martin before taking the veil, on which she had determined. She was married, her brother departed, I came into the world the sixth year after that union, and

LETTERS of the
lost my father before I was capable of
knowing him.

My mother, a widow at seven and twenty, and reduced to a pension of two thousand livres, fixed her residence at Mondelis. And, as, that estate was to be all my portion, she took a particular care to improve it; making every, year some new acquisitions; so that without neglecting the embellishment of the house, she doubled the value of an estate which in the hands of my father was only a mere pleasure seat.

Of all those which belong to me at present, Mondelis is the only one I like to live at. Every thing there is interesting to me, and I see myself surrounded with objects, that recal to mind the tenderness and solicitude of my affectionate mother.

mother. There are reposed her ashes, which render the place still more dear and respectable. Oh, my dear friend, how many tears have I shed on the marble that covers those sacred relics! How many times have I called my dear mother from the bottom of her tomb! How sincerely have I regretted the loss of that friend, whose counsel was so necessary to my youth, and whose kindness would have been so consolatory to my afflicted heart.

I was brought up under the eye of the Countess de Dammartin; she herself taking charge of my education: and early inculcating those maxims of truth and simplicity, which habituate us to think justly, to love our duties, and to discharge them without reluctance. Inge-

nuous and sincere myself, I harboured no doubt nor distrust of others; wholly engag'd by those gentle affections of which infancy is susceptible, every moment of my life was happy; when M. de Sancerre was presented to me as the man destined to partake of, and augment my happiness.

Marshal de Tende, his uncle by the mother's side, had always formed the project of our union. As a friend and relation of the Count de Dammartin, he respected his widow, visited her often, and sometimes spent whole months at Mondelis. As to myself, he loved me tenderly, and dropped intimations of those intentions, which the mediocrity of my fortune rendered very advantageous to me.

You

You know the Count de Sancerre, being an orphan from his cradle, had no reason to expect that opulence, of which you saw him possessed. His parents, prodigal and negligent, both died young, leaving to their son an estate in a manner confiscated, and their whole affairs in great disorder. Marshal de Tende, a man experienced in business, accepted the guardianship, paid off the debts accumulated on the estate, and redeemed it. Become thus the only creditor of his ward, the money he had advanced would have swallowed up two thirds of an inheritance, which it had rendered so considerable.

By these means, M. de Sancerre was brought up in excessive dependance on his uncle; and as he was naturally self-

F 3 interested,

interested, and had such great expectations from the goodness and affection of his uncle, he always professed the most profound submission.

I was hardly thirteen years of age when the Marshal informed my mother of his designs respecting the Count and me. Madam de Dammartin received with joy and even gratitude, the proposal of a settlement so much above her hopes. Our marriage was secretly determined on; and, unhappily for me, neither time nor circumstance intervened to change the disposition of our parents.

Three months after this affair was settled, M. d'Estelan returned to France; and had the supreme delight of surprising a beloved sister, who for nineteen years past had seldom heard from him, and

and never expected his return. Their first interview was affecting ; they embraced, they wept, asked each other questions both at once ; and while tears interrupted their discourse, they repeated their embraces, reciprocally demanding whether they were not deceived by some agreeable illusion, or if they really enjoyed the happiness of seeing each other again ?

When these natural and passionate emotions were a little becalmed, M. d'Estelan informed my mother, that when he went from France he had formed a design of marrying a rich widow, whose fortune and favour were under the management of his friend. But, that, as the heart often rejects the advice of the understanding, that design did not take place. A young Spaniard, descended

from a long train of illustrious ancestors, and possessed of nothing but her titles and personal charms, inspired him with a passion; he married her, and had a son by her. She had been dead about a twelvemonth, during which time, her husband, disconsolate for her loss, and disgusted at a country, wherein his complacency for a beloved wife only had fixed him, he sold off his possessions, and returned to his native country, in order to enjoy at ease a very considerable fortune acquired by the assistance of his friend, and by long voyages and hazardous enterprizes of his own.

My mother complained that he had not brought his son with him to Mondelis: on which M. d'Estelan sighed, and looking affectionately on me, alas, said

said he, I had designed him, during his infancy, for my neice ; but he is unworthy either of Adelaide or his father ! He is an abandoned, hopeless object, gross in his ideas, boisterous, rude and obstinate. He regards nothing, nor will any thing keep him within bounds. He sacrifices every consideration to his slightest whims ; careffes nor menaces, neither fair means nor severity, have any effect on his savage disposition : he occasioned the death of his mother, and will certainly hasten mine. I cannot console myself for having given life to a savage, capable of debasing my name, and perhaps, rendering it odious and dishonourable.

My mother endeavoured to assuage her brother's grief, and in some few days succeeded in mitigating his concern.

He

He pressed her to forsake her place of retirement, and to go and reside with him at Paris. He would divide his fortune, he said, between his son and me. The Countess, my mother gave him a promise that she would settle her affairs, and comply with his request. Delighted with this expectation, he took leave of us; but an unforeseen accident destroyed his projected happiness.

Count d'Estelan had brought with him, into France, a female negro slave, who had long served him in the quality of house-keeper. Two little daughters composed the whole family of this negro; the eldest of which, named Zabette, had inspired a passion in the breast of young d'Estelan; and, being brought up to imbibe our European

pean maxims, refused to gratify the desires of her lover. This resistance served only to render his passion the more violent; till borne away by the transports of his love and the natural impetuosity of his disposition, he offered to marry her. Zabette did not like France, and regretted the pleasures of her own country; so that the offers of carrying her back, of raising her from a state of slavery to the rank of Countess d'Estelan, and of making her mistress of a splendid house, seduced the young negro; who consented to leave her mother and to follow her lover.

Eager to be made happy, and influenced by his imprudent passion, this inconsiderate young lover found means to elude the vigilance of his governor, and

to

to force open a strong box of his father's; out of which he took the value of six hundred thousand livres in ingots of gold, with some few jewels, and made off in the night with Zabette for Brest; where he found a ship just ready to set sail, in which he embarked, after writing the following epistle to his father.

SIR,

" The husband of Zabette, and contented with the fortune I found means to make, I am going beyond sea, to live after my own fancy, and in search of that kind of happiness which best suits me. You may look upon me, Sir, as if I were no more; for I shall never have the assurance to appear again in your sight."

M. d'Este-

M. d'Estelan was on his return from Mondelis to Paris, when he met one of his people on the road, dispatched express to inform him of the elopement of his son, the breaking open his strong box, and the carrying off Zabette. The news of this adventure so greatly affected him, that his health, which was even then on the decline, totally forsook him, and he fell dangerously ill. My mother, informed of his situation, sent me to the convent of Martrai, and went immediately to attend her brother, whose illness proved long and tedious. After suffering a good deal, he seemed a little to recover, but without prospect or hopes of an entire restoration; for after languishing eight months, neither the assistance of art, nor the consolations of friendship, could

could restore an heart quite broken with sorrow.

All his fortune having been acquired, he had a right to dispose of it as he pleased. Detesting the baseness of his son, therefore he disinherited him by a legal and authentic act, which he confirmed in his last will; leaving me universal legatee to his effects, valued at near three millions. Of these he made me mistress immediately after his death; charging me only with the payment of an annuity of twenty thousand livres to his son, if he should ever return to France, and be in want.

A short time after Count d'Estelan had made this will, which my mother did *not dictate*, he expired in the arms of a sister, whom not the prospect of so brilliant an inheritance

inheritance could console for her loss. In quality of my guardian and governess, however, she took legal possession of the whole of her brother's fortune.

Marshal de Tende being charged with a secret, and important negociation from the court, was in Savoy when M. d'Estelan arrived in France; nor did he return from thence till a month after his death; how then could he *influence his determinations*? No, he was too noble, just and disinterested in his sentiments, to have ever encouraged a father to punish his son. You are surprized, perhaps, at seeing me so warmly defend the character of a man, who, toward the latter end of his life, discovered some marks of his hatred to me: I confess he became my enemy, but I ought not to complain of him;

him ; he imagined me capricious, dissembling and ungrateful ! How should he do otherwise than cease to love me ? His prejudices, however, have not extinguished my friendship, nor diminished my gratitude. You admired the tomb I caused to be erected at Mondelis for that respectable man ; it was by no means a monument dedicated to vanity and ostentation ; no, it is the monument of an affectionate veneration, of a remembrance never to be erased, but always dear ! Of all the arts M. de Sancerre was pleased to make use of, to embitter my life, there was none my heart so severely felt as that cruel deceit he employed to alienate from me the affection and esteem of that susceptible, that generous relation.

At

At the return of Marshal de Tende from Savoy, my mother was delighted to think she had it now in her power to bestow a rich heiress on his nephew. She saw M. de Sancerre, who was then about four and twenty; and as he seemed formed to please, she wished to bring about an union of hearts before our actual engagement. The Marshal agreed to bring his nephew to Mondelis, as soon as my mother's affairs would permit of her return. This was soon after; when I came home likewise from the convent. About two months elapsed without anything affecting the happy tranquility of my mind; but now the time drew near, in which I was to learn from experience that the apparent augmentation of our

VOL. I. *old book said* happiness
closed.

happiness is frequently the secret cause of its entire destruction.

This is sufficient, my dear Count, to satisfy your curiosity, and remove the doubt of Madam de Kerlanes. I have never received any information of the fate of young d'Estelan; though I have solicitously enquired, but always without success. Notwithstanding his faults, his claim is natural and just; if he were alive, I could not peaceably enjoy a fortune, which the law gives me it is true, but which my conscience would oblige me to restore. Without doubt M. d'Estelan is dead. However, since the decease of M. de Sancerre, I have separated from my income the twenty thousand livres designed by my uncle for his son, if poor and destitute. This fund belongs to all those

those who are really in want. I can take from it two hundred louis more, as M. de Mariadek desires it, to put Mademoiselle de Kerlanes in a state to appear decently in the eyes of the family into which she is going to enter. Adieu.

LETTER XIII.

I AM really affected with the reproaches with which you filled your last letter. No, my dear Count, you have not *lost my confidence*; but wherefore this pressing curiosity, why *beg* and *conjure* me to let you penetrate a mystery, which hitherto nothing could induce me to divulge? It is still a profound secret, even to my relations, so nearly interested in knowing the motives of my conduct. M. de Sancerre is now no more; will it become me to cast a stain on his memory? Ah! let us not disturb his ashes! I confess I loved, hated, despised him; but his death should efface my resentment. I wish only totally to forget him; happy if in

in forgiving him I never recollect how much he stood in need of forgiveness.

If, as you say, *my conduct sufficiently declared to all France my extreme aversion for the Count de Sancerre*, let us leave *all France* in their mistake. Of what consequence is it to me at present to undeceive them? I cannot speak of this subject, without giving pain to more than one person; nay, you yourself perhaps are interested in my silence.

You would not voluntarily separate yourself from an object that was agreeable to you! Indeed I believe you. Your sex have neither pride nor delicacy: your own gratification is the principle of all your actions. Most certainly if you and I were in the same situation to follow sim-

ply the dictates of our hearts, they would naturally lead us different ways.

You know my manner of thinking ! Are you sure of this, with regard to subjects we have never conversed about ? Coldness, indifference and pride are the only obstacles to my entering into a second engagement ! Who told you so ? From what do you infer such a conclusion ? This notion is but a consequence of your first prepossessions. I tell you, my friend, you are mistaken ; under the appearance of that coldness which I am reproached with, is concealed a tender, perhaps too tender, a heart ! Grown wise by misfortune, I am become curious to know, and make experiments on my subjects ; while my heart ever ready to bestow itself, hath always found reasons to desist and defend itself.

itself. The man we know the most of, is seldom he who is first chosen: there is one, indeed, who appears to possess every good quality, all those virtues, which are necessary to determine me.—Yet, alas! from a strange capriciousness of fortune, I dare not bestow a thought on this object of my sincere esteem.—But don't speak to me a word about it; ask me for no explanation of what I have said. No questions; not a syllable! Permit me to treat you as I do myself. Shall I not conceal those sentiments from you which I hardly dare avow to my own heart?

You may re-assure Madam de Valancé that her endeavours will prove unsuccessful. I have no inclination to change my condition; I have indeed less now than ever. In reality, my present situation

might be very happy. My taste, my reason attaches me to it; with friends, books, amusing studies, frequent airings, and a little circle of acquaintance, in which sentiment is always displayed, and sometimes wit; I may surely be sufficiently entertained during a voyage so short as that is which we call life! When we are upon a road, my friend, which we are certain never to travel again, we ought not to fix our minds on objects with a view to their exclusive possession; it is enough that they serve to amuse us as we pass by.

Madam de Miranda will on Tuesday be the Countess de Termes. Madam de Martigues wants them to stay till the return of the Marquis de Montalais; but Termes is not complaisant enough to

admit

listen

listen to any thing on this subject of delay. M. de Piennes reckons in vain upon the force of example: Poor Count! He will exclaim, perhaps, for a long time yet, *why did I ever set eyes on her!* *Why did I love her!*

In the mean time, I am quite grave, and even melancholy: there seems to me such a sameness and insipidity in every thing about me! You are in the right to stay in Brittany; we are tired to death here; nothing animates, nothing diverts us. There is nothing lively and spirited in our amusements at Paris: one meets with nobody here but mad folks or idiots. Adieu, you may rank me in either of those two classes in which you think you will be able to bear with me best.

LETTER XIV.

I WRITE to you in haste, my dear Count, to acquaint you that I have not time to write to you; being just setting out with Madam de Martigues, M. de Thémire, and his charming companion. The old Countess de Termes will have her grand-son married at her estate at la Fère: for which they are making great preparations. We hear there is to be great festivity, every body speaks of it, and is in high expectations; but alas, the pleasures we promise ourselves are but seldom experienced!

You give me chagrin: *Nothing, say you, should be kept secret in speaking to a friend: true friendship admits of no reserve.*

serve. I think differently ; one ought to hide from one's best friends such secrets as would give them pain. I shall examine whether it be possible for me to satisfy your curiosity without wounding that friendship of which you presume to make a doubt.

The more I think of the circumstances into which I shall be forced to enter, the greater seems the impropriety of submitting them to your view ; but I shall see, I tell you. Adieu ; I must not make them wait for me ; time is precious, and so I leave you.

LETTER XV.

La Fere.

AFTER mature consideration, I write expressly to desire you will renounce your design of making me explain myself concerning the behaviour of M. de Sancerre with regard to me. I even reproach myself sincerely for having suffered those expressions to escape my pen which have induced you to require this explanation.

I assure you again, you are yourself interested in my being silent on this head: a person also whom you greatly loved is still more interested in it: the part she had in my chagrin, and conduct, is inseparable from that confidence you would force me to repose in you.

Had

Had there not been very powerful motives to restrain my confidence, should I have refused myself the consolation of opening my whole heart to you ; of disburthening into your breast that load of sorrow whose weight I felt even severely when I first knew you ? Why should I not have justified my character in the eyes of a man, whose esteem appeared so necessary to my happiness ?

All the proofs of my constant complacency to an ungrateful husband are in my hands. That casket which Count de Sancerre, when he was dying, made a sign for you to take, without being able to tell you its importance and destination ; and which you found mentioned in his will with these words, *to be restored to Madam * * ** ; that very casket, the

last object of his concern, contained the secret of his heart and mine.

To That Madam without a name or title, those words *to be restored*, with the absence of one of his people, led you into an error. You confided in his valet-de-chambre, who assured you that casket came from me: I did indeed give it to M. de Sancerre, but another person was to have received it after his decease. You restored it me, and the sight of it made me burst into those bitter lamentations, at which you were so much surprised: I opened it in your presence, and was going to let you look over the papers it contained; when a second thought, on reflection, prevented me. At my desire, you consented to take no inventory of them; while the little trifles

in

in it beside, did not seem to you to merit the attention of M. de Sancerre's heirs.

The person whom my husband designed to render mistress of that casket durst not reclaim it.

For two years did I enjoy her disquietude, her fears, and those continual alarms which must have agitated her mind; but I enjoyed them alone. A remarkable singularity, incident to me, and to the events of my life, hath always compelled me to keep my sentiments locked up a profound secret in my own breast. I experience even yet this uncommon peculiarity of my destiny; tho' surrounded with sincere and affectionate friends, I have no confidant. Some secret motive hath always prevented my tasting

tasting the agreeable pleasure of communicating one's thoughts to a friend. This you ought in particular to be assured of, since my heart is not entirely open to you.

If after what I have now said, you persist in requiring a farther explanation, I am determined to satisfy you. But, my dear Count, if I should discover to you a melancholy truth, if I should attack the morals of a person to whom you were united by the ties of blood and friendship, if I should dissipate a flattering illusion which hath long given you pleasure, don't reproach me; blame only your own obstinacy, and remember it is you that oblige me to it.

To-morrow will be a happy day for Termes. Madam de Miranda is so lovely,

gaiety

so

so good-natured, so amiable! that every body envies the good fortune of the Count.—Termes is also so agreeable, so worthy, so sensible!—that every body envies the lot of Miranda. The old Countess does the honours of the house, with a surprizing magnificence. I should certainly be amused here, if, for some time past, an unaccountable languor had not infected my spirits: disgust and insipidity cast a gloom of melancholy all around me. I tremble at this situation.

What! will not the joy of Madam de Miranda wake me out of it? Shall I not share with rapture in the happiness of a friend so dear to my heart! What shall I become a misanthrope? Adieu.

LETTER XVI.

YOU are determined to have it so. I yield therefore, though with extreme reluctance, to your solicitations: but I yield to them because I esteem you, and because I cannot refuse you a satisfaction which it is in my power to give you. Read then, and remember it is your importunities that have drawn the secret from me. The proofs of the truth are still in that fatal casket, which you yourself put into my hands. At your return, you shall be at full liberty to see and examine them.

The

The Motives of the conduct of Adelaide de Dammartin, towards the Count de Sancerre.

Were any other person to run over these sheets, he would be surprized to find me entering into particulars, of which so intimate a friend could not be supposed ignorant. Your regard for me, and doubtless your conviction that I was in the wrong, have prevented your ever asking me any questions about my behaviour towards M. de Sancerre. The three years you spent at Malta, occasioned you to lose sight of your friend ; whom you found, at your return after your brother's death, married and parted from his wife. She was described to you as a peevish, melancholy being ; you was told she hated her husband ; my own re-

lations, as well as those of M. de Sancerre, giving it out every where that my antipathy to him was a kind of perversion of the understanding. You must have been told that his caresses and solicitudes, the tender and ardent proofs of his passion, threw me into a kind of phrensy. You must have repeatedly heard such assurances as these, and why should you doubt the truth of them? You did not know me. If since then, also, my disposition and sentiments have acquired me your friendship and esteem; if you have always found me subject to reason, attached to my duty, *incapable of exercising a severe command over those who depend on me*; how often must you not have said with astonishment, *how greatly is this woman changed!* and yet, my friend,

friend, I was at sixteen exactly the same as I am at six and twenty ; but read and judge.

A short time after the death of Count d'Estelan, and my mother's return to Mondelis, Marshal de Tende came over thither, and brought with him M. de Sancerre ; whom he presented to me, desiring I would entertain for his beloved nephew the sentiments of an affectionate sister. The figure of the young Count charmed me, his wit seduced, and his solicitudes affected me. Informed of the intentions of his uncle, he applied himself entirely to the study of pleasing me, and to persuade me he loved me. I knew not either to dissemble or to deceive, so that my heart was easily capti-

vated by means of an art to which I was
a stranger.

As there was nothing to oppose our union, the Marshal was urgent to have it concluded. In concert with my mother, therefore, he directed the articles of marriage, and settled our fortunes separately on each. While these articles were reading over, M. de Sancerre cou'd not conceal his surprize. He expected to have seen himself advantaged by his uncle, and imagined that by marrying he should be rendered capable of shaking off that dependance under which he had always lain, and had long regretted. His silence and blushes betrayed his secret dissatisfaction ; he was going nevertheless to sign, when the Marshal stopped his hand. Here, Sir, said he, shewing him a packet

a packet which he held in his hand, within this cover are two wills ; the one of which appoints you my heir ; the other makes your wife my universal legatee, and excludes you for ever from the succession. Your behaviour during my life will determine which of those acts shall be valid. Your father involved my sister in afflictions which caused her death ; the sorrowful remembrance of this circumstance, which is always present to my mind, induces me to deprive you of the dangerous means of easily ruining your wife, and reducing your children to that distressful situation in which you were left yourself. I have provided for you a consort that is young, handsome, noble, modest, amiable and rich ; one possessed of every thing proper to inspire a passion and fix

your affections. Her father was my relation; both the ties of blood and of friendship attaching me to the daughter of Count de Dammartin, I most ardently wish to see her happy; it is your part to make her so. My fortune will be the reward of your endeavours to make her life easy and agreeable. While Adelaide comes to me, contented and happy, to thank me for having formed this connection between you, I shall be an attentive relation, a sincere friend, and an affectionate father. But beware; if your wife should ever come in tears to reproach me for what I am now doing; if you afflict her, and give her just cause of complaint, she will become the sole object of my affection; I will do every thing for her, and nothing for you. You will lose at

once

once my esteem, my affection, and my estate. It is not yet too late, added he; don't enter into this engagement, if you are afraid of the conditions. M. de Sancerre made no other answer than a low bow, and taking up the pen signed his name.

We were married without pomp or eclat; and as my mother knew me to be of a delicate and tender constitution, she proposed to the Count to defer the consummation of our nuptials for that year, and to leave me at Mondelis; promising to bring me to Paris the following winter, and to receive him in the hotel that was my father's, which she had lately bought of the Marquis de Thoré, and had ordered to be enlarged and embellished.

M. de

M. de Sancerre seemed to consent with reluctance to this proposal; he could not submit, he said, to such rigid injunctions, without depriving himself of the opportunity of being tempted to break through them. Accordingly he set out a few days after from Mondelis. For my part, I was really afflicted at his departure, and wept a good deal. His person, his assiduities, his passionate professions, had raised in me those delightful emotions, which are naturally excited by love in a heart at liberty to indulge it, without doubts or fears to disturb its flattering illusions.

M. de Sancerre wrote to me frequently; his letters giving me a sincere delight. His tender descriptions of the pains of absence; of his longing desire to be with me,

me, to see me all his own, a desire of which he repeatedly assured me I could not know the force and extent; of his ardent wishes to anticipate the moment of his happiness and mine; all this daily augmented the vivacity of my sentiments. In the simplicity of my ideas, this happiness he talked of, appeared to me to be confined solely to the pleasure of seeing him, hearing him speak, loving him, pleasing him, and being the dearest object of his heart. Without possessing this happiness, I enjoyed it; but my felicity was of short duration! To have enjoyed it long, I should have remained ignorant that M. de Sancerre played upon my innocence and credulity.

He was just set out for the army in Germany, when my mother was taken
dangerously

dangerously ill. The first symptoms of her disorder made her justly apprehensive of her fate ; and fearful, on account of the malignity of the fever, for me. At her desire therefore, Madam de Lugei, who was then at Mondelis, caused me to be hurried by force out of her chamber ; and in spite of my cries and resistance, carried off with her in a coach to the convent of Martrai, where I was committed to the care of the abbess. After a week's being elapsed between hopes and fears, I was informed of the death of my affectionate mother, my amiable, my respectable friend ! a loss to me irreparable, then most severely felt, and ever to be remembered and lamented.

I could not return to Mondelis to live there by myself ; and my sister was at

Bagnieres,

Bagnieres, where the Marquis de Thoré, her husband, was gone to drink the waters. Madam de Lugei, after making a short stay at the abbey, was determined by the season to return to Paris, and pressed me to accompany her, offering me an apartment in her house. Marshal de Tende, who was appointed by will my mother's executor, coming down to Mondelis, and advising me to accept of Madam de Lugei's offer till the return of M. de Sancerre, I determined to leave the convent, and set out with her ladyship and the Marshal.

I spent a month at Paris in a very languishing and almost inconsolable situation; so that I did not perceive the singularity of Madam de Lugei's behaviour. This woman, accustomed to do nothing without

without a view of being remarked ; officious, pressing, absurdly obliging, mean, vain, making every thing of importance ; fond of being known and talked of ; aspiring after celebrity, unable to attain it, and only drawing upon herself the ridicule of pretending to it ; this active *restless* woman, I say, mixed so much affectionation in all the solicitude she descended to bestow on my conduct, that the absurdity of her own began at length to strike me, to displease, and presently to give me quite disgust.

My mourning, my youth, and profound grief did not permit me to go abroad ; and I did not covet dissipation of which I never had stood in need : but hearing Madam de Lugei incessantly repeating that she admitted nobody during

ing my stay with her; that she would not expose a woman of my age to the *seduction* of a *corrupt world*, I perceived myself under some restraint, was even offended at her civilities, and conceived I ought to leave her at liberty to see the world again; which in truth she is very far from hating. I desired Marshal de Tende therefore, to permit me to go and reside at Tresnel till the end of the campaign. Ever ready to oblige me, the Marshal ordered an apartment to be got ready, and I hastened to take possession of it; from which moment Madam de Lugeil lost both my confidence and friendship. About the middle of October, M. de Sancerre arrived from the army; when not chusing to live at my sister's, and the house I live in at present being under

der repair, the Marshal indulged us with his summer pavillion. The day my sister came to fetch me from Tresnel, in order to conduct me to the hotel de Tende, was celebrated by a magnificent entertainment. Here I spent four months, so well satisfied with my situation, so sensible of the tenderness of M. de Sancerre, and of the paternal affection of the Marshal, that the happiness I enjoyed seemed to me the highest imaginable. Peaceful ignorance, flattering error, charming delusions ! are you alone capable of making us happy ! Oh, my friend, my heart is still moved at the recollection of a time, in which, though I was deceived, betrayed, sacrificed, I believed myself at the summit of human felicity.

M. de

M. de Sancerre laid under a restraint by that attention which his uncle paid to all his actions, and having assured himself of my discretion by several trials he had made of it, told me in confidence that he was passionately fond of play, particularly Lansquenet; but that he durst not indulge that propensity, because it was an amusement the Marshal detested. He informed me farther that he used to spend part of the night in playing at this game, with a lady whose house lay adjoining to the back of our hotel; discovering an extreme desire to profit sometimes by that conveniency. Credulous and complacent, I myself took the candle in my hand, and lighted my husband across the gallery, to a little pair of back stairs, which he might descend

without being heard either by the Marshal's people or our own. Stupid creature as I was! I prided myself in being the sole confidant of M. de Sancerre! How cruelly did he abuse my simplicity! What an unworthy use did he make of my innocent affection! What a vile advantage did experience and dissimulation give him over me!

I was really chagrined on his account, when we were going to quit the house of the Marshal; he was fond of me, and I loved and respected him. The very evening I left the hotel de Tende to go to my new habitation, this affectionate relation made me a present of a rich casket. The wood of which it was made, though rare and costly, was hardly to be seen on the outside, the whole being almost

most covered with plates of gold ; and so contrived as to serve for a writing-desk, a liquor-cafe, and an escrutore. It was furnished with useful toys, perfumes, and a number of other agreeable trifles. The Marshal was greatly diverted at my looking and fumbling about in vain for the secret spring by which it was to be opened ; and which he was obliged at last to discover to me himself.

M. de Sancerre admired the security of this secret fastening ; and appeared so delighted with this pretty casket, that as I durst not give it him, I immediately employed an ingenious artizan to make one like it. Unluckily the same kind of wood was not to be got, but by making the gold plates a little broader, this slight difference was imperceptible.

Having furnished it with such things as I imagined might be agreeable to M. de Sancerre, I took a secret opportunity of placing it myself in his closet: in doing which, as it was an act of choice, I felt a sensible pleasure, little thinking, alas! that this fatal gift would serve to disclose to me the character of a man, whom it was so necessary for me to esteem.

Sedulous to preserve the good opinion of the Marshal, M. de Sancerre did not appear to change his conduct, though removed to some distance from him. He did change it however, and that greatly, though I alone had occasion to remark it. He continued to affect an excessive passion for me; to boast of the charms of my person, my talents, wit, and evenness of temper; to be always talking of

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the satisfaction he experienced in the most affectionate intercourse: in the mean time, by accompanying me wherever I went, he acquired the reputation of a sensible man, capable of despising ridiculous customs, and of avowing a reasonable attachment. I heard on every side commendations of my husband, while I myself was envied as one of the happiest of women: I was surrounded with eclat, and glittered in diamonds and gold; my jewels, my équipage, all being the subject of universal admiration. Every thing was chosen by M. de Sancerre, whose taste and magnificence was surprizing; while at the same time he refused me the merest trifles I had a mind to; demanded an account even of my pin-money, and obliged my women to inform him in

what manner I disposed of it ; my natural generosity of temper hence frequently drawing upon me raillery or reproaches.

As the same apartment did not now subject us to be constantly together, he seldom came into mine at those hours when I was alone. But, though caressed thus in public, and neglected in private, I remained still blind ; I did not annex my notions of happiness to those proofs of my husband's affection which he now gradually neglected to give me, but to those which he still bestowed. He followed me every where, making use of the most flattering expressions, so that I really thought myself beloved, nor did that kind of coldness at which any other woman might have been alarmed, destroy this agreeable delusion. Ah ! why
was

was it ever destroyed ! Ah, why, my friend, did a cruel accident undeceive me, and rob me of an error that made me happy !

One evening, just after M. de Sancerre was set out for Versailles, the floor of his closet took fire ; when my people being frightened, hurried away some of his most valuable things into my apartment. On returning home from my sister's, where I supped, I found the whole house in confusion ; happily indeed the fire was put out, and the danger over : but as it was necessary to have the floor and wainscotting of M. de Sancerre's closet repaired, I suffered several of the little moveables which the workmen might have damaged, to remain in mine. I was going into bed when I saw a letter

lying on the chimney-piece, which the disorder my people were in had prevented their giving me. It was from Madam de Cezanes, who desired me to lend her two diamond sprigs in order to have others made like them. I asked for my casket, which I opened, and bid Paulina, one of my women, take out the sprigs, and carry them next day to Madam de Cezanes. Paulina after looking a long time, tumbling over a heap of papers, and taking out all the drawers, cried out, she could not find the jewels. I went myself to look, saw the mistake, and immediately recollect ed it was the casket of M. de Sancerre. I then went into my own closet, took out the sprigs, and gave them to her. She trembled and turned so pale as she took them out of my hand, that I thought

thought the terror of the preceding accident had affected her spirits and made her ill. Being unwilling therefore to keep her up any longer, and finding myself little disposed to sleep, I dismissed her. Before I took a book, I thought it necessary to put up M. de Sancerre's papers, which Paulina had disordered, and was going to shut the casket, when the following words appearing underscored on the fold of a letter, excited my curiosity, *I permitted you to marry Adelaide.*

I come now to that part of my narrative, which hath so long prevented me from opening to you my heart. Shall I venture, my dear Count, to send you a copy of that letter, to discover to you an odious secret that cannot fail to mortify you? What an agreeable prejudice shall
I destroy!

I destroy! Can I mention to you the name of that woman who had the astonishing art to manage so many jarring interests, to preserve even her favoured lovers, to enslave those whom she sacrificed to her vanity, to possess their esteem, together with the veneration of an abused husband; and, under the cloak of decency, modesty, and even religion, to indulge a licentious passion, avowed without shame, and gratified at the expence of honour and humanity. It was not enough, it seems, for that cruel woman to deprive me of the heart of M. de Sancerre; even my apparent happiness excited her jealousy: she required, she insisted, that my husband should give me proofs of his hatred and contempt.—My friend, my imprudent friend, why do you

you force me to tell you that Madam de Cezanes, your relation, she whom you thought for many years *possessed of innocent affections*, she, whose memory you still cherish and revere, was the most false, mean, and contemptible of creatures.

Forgive, my dear Count, forgive these harsh epithets; they are not dictated by resentment. Time and other ideas have effaced the emotions of hatred which Madam de Cezanes had excited in my heart. I could have avenged myself when living, but was satisfied with only terrifying her. Why then should I expose, after her death, a reputation acquired and preserved by so many artifices? Why should I afflict her friends, or put her husband and relations to the blush? I have resisted even the desire of justifying

my

my own character, because it was impossible for me to do it without giving pain to those who were connected with that woman.

The relations and friends of M. de Sancerre, he himself, and Madam de Cezanes, blamed me for nothing but *my difficult and inflexible temper!* When I returned into the world, it would have been mean and childish to recollect what had passed. Other people hardly remember it, and it is daily effaced from my own memory; perhaps too easily so. Adieu, this packet is large, the next courier shall bring you the remainder.

Continuation.

I used often to see Madam de Cezanes, but took no pleasure in her company; it even gave me that kind of disgust, which

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an affected austerity naturally excites in a woman of my age. M. de Sancerre obliged me, however, to cultivate an acquaintance which he had made for me; while his intimate connection with the Marquis her husband engaged me to conceal the disinclination I had for such grave and tiresome company.

I recollect the hand-writing of Madam de Cezanes; and the singularity of the expression, *I permitted you to marry Adelaide*, made me desirous of reading the letter I had in my hand. Here follows an exact copy.

*Letter from the Marchioness de Cezanes to
M. de Sancerre.*

I will neither see you nor hear you speak: how many times must you be told so?

so? You cannot justify yourself; your daring falsehoods can no longer impose on me. You deceive me; I know it, I am sure of it. You are treacherous, I hate, despise, renounce, and have done with you for ever. Your excuses are all abominable: *I permitted you to marry Adelaide!* do you repeat *I permitted you?* What ingratitude is there in that reproach? Did not your uncle insist on that fatal marriage? Did I sacrifice the happiness of alone possessing you; devote all the pleasures of my life to your fortune! And does this give you a right to betray me? To give yourself up to the indulgence of a ridiculous passion for a child? To abuse my kindness and condescension? To break through all your protestations? To rob me of an happiness I purchased

so dearly? To abandon me to the fury of jealousy? And in that to expose myself, in the violence of my transport, to the danger of losing, in a moment, a reputation acquired by so much constraint and mortification? Nay, of losing that respect, which perhaps I ought to have excited, before an ungrateful wretch had misled my reason, and triumphed over my principles.

I permitted you to marry Adelaide! But did I permit you to bestow on her a heart which I thought was undoubtedly mine? You do not love Madam de Sancerre! You don't love her, do you say? Why then do you follow her about wherever she goes? Why are you eternally talking of her? Why repeat even before me that she is charming, amiable, engaging? False man!

man ! Is Adelaide then my rival ? Does she share your heart.—But to share would be little ; she has it all.—Oh ! that I should live to think that any other woman, should please, attract, *engage* you ! What ! shall the idea of another be ever present with you ? Even in my company, and perhaps in my very arms.—But let me not indulge so cruel a doubt, it leads to desperation.

And pray what has this young, bashful thing so very *engaging* ? Is it her awkward country timidity that so much delights you ? Is it her *regular*, *delicate*, inanimated features ? The *freshness* of her cheeks, which is partly owing to the inactivity of her mind ? Her *large* unmeaning eyes ? Her childish *good-nature*, her tiresome equality of temper ; These

are

are the *simple charms*, the *captivating graces* that allure you; that occasion you to dangle after Madam de Sancerre, and make her appear so *engaging* to you? Since when, pray, have coldness and simplicity had the power to affect you?

In consenting to your marriage, I thought to have bound you to me as much from gratitude, as you were before from love. How many tears have I not shed? What did I not suffer during your long residence at Marshal de Tende's! with what grief was not my soul penetrated! But I overlooked this part of your conduct, as a necessary affiduity paid elsewhere; I did not complain, but contented myself with those short opportunities, which Adelaide was deceived to assist in giving me, of your company.

But at present who obliges you to pass whole days and nights together with her?

— Yes, whole nights! with what face could you deny it yesterday at my brother's? — Madam de Sancerre stayed after you went away; when, persuaded of your deceit, and enraged almost to distraction, I asked her, and she blushed; on persisting in my enquiry, she looked down in a confusion that convinced me of your falsehood. I still persevered nevertheless to draw from her in confidence an explicit confession, which still blushing, hesitating and disconcerted, she at length made me.—Hateful wretch! yes, I detest you. Your disposition is false, your understanding weak, and your heart inconstant: I again repeat, I never will see you more. I will break through all those ties

ties which attach me to so ungrateful a creature. Come not near me this evening, no, never come near me again.

P. S. I have changed my mind without changing my resolution. I have more reasons than one for speaking to you once again. I will afford you a moment, and only a moment. Come exactly at twelve at night.

It is impossible to express the trouble and surprize I felt on the perusal of this letter: my heart was so full, and my imagination so extremely agitated, that I could not help thinking myself in a terrible dream. I took up the note Madam de Cezanes had just sent me, and with a trembling hand compared it with the letter before me. The characters were exactly the same, and it appeared from the

date of the letter that it had been written soon after our having quitted the Marshal's hotel. I recollect the impertinent questions of Madam de Cezanes, and her rude manner of catechizing me at her brother's : concluding, from a number of successive reflections, that ever since that time my replies would have given less embarrassment to me, and doubtless less offence to her.

I pushed the fatal casket from me ; got up and left it one moment and returned to it again the next. A strong and almost involuntary propensity led me to take up a second letter, and successively to peruse them all.

You will accuse me of indiscretion ; but perhaps that indeterminate emotion, which make us desirous to penetrate affliction

flicting secrets, to see all, and to know all, however painful, does not arise merely from an ardent, indiscreet curiosity, but from a feeble hope concealed in the bottom of the heart; a hope which is nourished, supported and animated by doubt. Ah! who can be really desirous of the mortifying conviction of a dreadful certainty! In pursuing my researches, it seemed to me as if I might lose mine; while my hope induced me to think that every letter I read might efface the cruel impression of the preceding.

But through them all I met with nothing but marks of spite, jealousy, selfishness and the fury of unbounded passion. I was frequently mentioned in the course of them, but always with disdain and contempt: happy to be so favoured

by nature that the railleries of Madam de Cezanes fell only on my youth, inexperience and credulity.

Among several little cases containing portraits of Madam de Cezanes, I recollect one which I had given to M. de Sancerre, and which, I believed, on his word, that he had lost. The sight of it made me shudder, and I opened it with fear and apprehension; flattering myself however that I should see my own picture. On the contrary that of Madam de Cezanes presented itself to my view, and gave the most grievous wound to my afflicted heart. Hitherto my trouble and surprize had suspended the power of reflection; but now I perceived the utmost of my misfortune; and my collected ideas were all fixed on Madam de Cezanes.

This

This imperious mistress of my husband seemed alone to excite all the terrible emotions, by which I was agitated. The having taken my portrait out of that case, recalled my thoughts to M. de Sancerre; by whom I saw myself sacrificed, hated, despised. I now began to weep, and to bathe with my tears the fatal proofs of his baseness and treachery.

Falling backwards into a chair, with my hands clasped, and my eyes fixed on the ground, I abandoned myself to the bitterness of sorrow, when of a sudden my door opened, and M. de Sancerre precipitately entered the room. At the sight of him I gave a loud scream; he came up to me, saw his casket in disorder, and his papers spread all around me, and of course his secret discovered; on

which, his countenance changed, and I could read the severest menaces in the fury of his looks. A mortal cold seized upon my senses, I trembled, and made an effort to fly from him; but my heart failed me, and I fell down senseless at his feet.

When I recovered from my swoon, the first object that presented itself was Marshal de Tende. He was sitting by me, greatly anxious and concerned at having seen me in fainting fits, which he told me had succeeded each other from midnight till noon; he fetched a deep sigh, and press'd my hands affectionately between his. Oh my daughter! cried this good, this venerable old man, what a strange accident! Who can have occasioned it? Your paleness, your depression

of spirits, your earnest manner of looking at me, your sighs, your tears, the mournful repetition of the name of your husband, during the short intervals of your fits, all assure me there is some mystery in it, which I want to discover. Ordering my women, therefore, out of the room, he began to interrogate me, conjuring me to answer him. Hath Sancerre, said he, occasioned these tears? Is it he who hath afflicted you to this excess? Speak, said he, speak my dear neice, hide nothing from me; you owe that confidence to those sentiments which engage me to ask it of you.

The kindness of the Marshal, his affectionate caresses, the certainty of being beloved by him, all excited in me the natural desire of opening my heart to him,

and

and to move his compassion by a recital
of my sufferings.

I threw myself into the arms of this respectable friend, and bathed his face with my tears; I would have spoke, but my sighs choaked my voice. I could do nothing but inarticulately repeat the name of my husband. Your husband! says the Marshal eagerly, what has he done? In marrying you to M. de Sancerre, I promised, I vowed to take care of your interest and happiness; to be your protector against him. Has he been wanting to you in that regard which, is in so many respects, owing to you? Does he slight you? Has he offended you? You weep, and are silent, Madam. Why dare you not be sincere and explicit with a relation, a friend, whose affections and justice you
are

are so well convinced of? Have you forgot that I reserved to myself the right of punishing the Count de Sancerre, if he gave you any just reason to complain of his conduct?

This last expression recalled to mind what the Marshal had said to his nephew, when the marriage articles were signed. I recollect the two wills he mentioned, by one of which I was made the Marshal's heir. In proceeding, therefore, with my complaint to him, I was going to set him against M. de Sancerre, to induce him to bestow all his favours alone on me, to reduce my husband to a state of dependance on a woman he did not love; and whom he would possibly hate the more, for her having it in her power to oblige him. This reflection wounded my

soul, and deprived me of the consolation of pouring my griefs into the bosom of my only friend and protector; it even forced from me the most sorrowful exclamations, while long and repeated sighs were the only language of my heart. This alternative of substituting me to possess the rights of my husband, deprived me for ever of the power of accusing, or complaining against him.

The Marshal continued pressing me to put more confidence in him, when a servant, in obedience to his orders, came to acquaint him his nephew was returned from Versailles. He got up in order to go out to meet him, but the Count de Sancerre prevented him, by appearing at the door of my chamber, which he entered, pale and confused, proceeding slowly,

slowly, and alternately turning his eyes towards his uncle and me, as if it were to read in ours the reception he was likely to meet with. Encouraged by the first words of the Marshal, from which he gathered he was ignorant of the adventure of the night, he flung himself on his knees at my bed-side, took my hands, and kissed them a thousand times; called for my women, and made them relate all the particulars of the accident that had happened to me, every now and then interrupting their recital by marks of the greatest tendency and affection. Paulina told him that being awakened by the noise of my bell, she came running down stairs, and found me cold and senseless, with my face and neck bathed in tears. M. de Sancerre might safely question her without

without fearing any thing from her replies: for as he went out of my chamber before she entered it, his precaution put him beyond suspicion.

It was not accident that brought him to my chamber at three o'clock in the morning. The servant of Madam de Cezanes, who brought me the note the preceding evening, had seen M. de Sancerre's closet on fire: so that the Count, returning from Versailles after the king was retired to bed, and arriving at the house of his mistress, had been informed of the accident. Uneasy about his papers, he hastened home, and finding his closet half unfurnished, and knowing his casket was in mine, he thought to have stolen across my chamber softly, and have brought off this important casket without

without waking me: but, listening first at the key-hole of the door, and overhearing me sigh and weep, he opened it and came in, as I have before related. When he left me senseless and dying, he rung the bell for my women, carried off his casket, hurried out of the house, and forbid any of his people to say he had been there. He was punctually obeyed, and I did not learn these circumstances till long after his death.

The air of concern which M. de Sancerre affected in asking me the cause of so surprizing an alteration, his caresses, the ingenuousness of his questions, and his audacity in repeating them, caused me insensibly to recollect myself, in order to be assured whether I was not mistaken, and if my imagination had not been disturbed

sturbed by a dream ; whether the man who was giving me so many marks of his tenderness, was really the lover of Madam de Cezanes, or that affectionate husband whose passion seemed solively and natural.

This dissimulation of M. de Sancerre succeeded ; he repeated several times that my illness might be the effect of the fright occasioned by the disorder my people were in, and their exaggerated account of the danger from the fire. The Marshal, his uncle, believed it, and left me, fully persuaded that his nephew had no share in reducing me to that terrible situation in which he had found me. M. de Sancerre accompanied him, but presently returned, assuming a very different tone and behaviour. " Madam," says he, my imprudence and your
" indiscreet

“ indiscreet curiosity, have put into your
“ power the reputation of a respectable
“ woman, and the fortune of a man of
“ whom you have my leave to complain.
“ You ought to have thought yourself
“ beloved, but you have discovered
“ that a connection formed before I
“ knew you, does not permit me, though
“ not blind to your charms, to give you
“ an heart that was before engaged. I
“ was compelled to be yours; a com-
“ pulsion which the more endeared my
“ former attachment. I will not flatter
“ you with a sacrifice I have no design
“ to make you. I shall not stoop so low as
“ to beseech, or even desire you to keep
“ the secret: your promises to do it would
“ be to no purpose, it would be too much
“ your interest to reveal it; nor can a

“ woman ever resist the satisfaction of
“ revenge. No, Madam, go, tell the
“ Marshal, incense him against me, ruin
“ Madam de Cezanes, rob me of my
“ inheritance; but in causing my ruin be
“ assured you shall meet your own. You
“ must expect to receive from me all
“ the severity that disdain, hatred and
“ resentment can make you feel. Yes,
“ I will embitter every hour, every mo-
“ ment of your life! The procedure of
“ M. de Cezanes will determine mine:
“ whatever he attempts against his wife,
“ be assured I shall attempt against you.
“ What measures have I to keep with
“ any one? No, imprudent young crea-
“ ture, you have reason to tremble, to
“ shudder for the fate you may prepare
“ for her who is dear to me: for, by all
“ that's

"that's good and sacred, I swear it shall
"be yours."

Having said this, he rose up and was going towards the door, I held out my arms, and called to him with a feeble but affectionate tone; ah, Sir! do not leave me, do not hate me; I will never speak a word of this fatal secret: never will I open my lips to injure or afflict you. He would not hear me, but went away without returning me an answer.

He was hardly gone out of the room, when one of my women gave me some papers that had tumbled out of my bosom in undressing me. I saw with surprise it was the letter from Madam de Cezanes, of which you have just read the copy. It was wrapped up in the note

which had served to prove the hand-writing. I was at first going to send for my husband, and to put this letter into his hands; but, intimidated by the apprehensions of putting him again into a rage, and of hearing him threaten me with that cruelty which had already so grievously wounded my heart, I was afraid to call him back. I therefore locked up these papers, and said nothing of the matter. How many times since have I perused that letter! How many times have my tears burst from my eyes, in repeating those cruel expressions, *You do not love Madam de Sancerre!* *you do not love her!* say you?

In the evening I had a violent fever; and for several days after repeated and violent paroxysms deprived me of all understanding

understanding and knowledge. When I began again to distinguish objects, I saw my sister, the Marshal de Tende, Madam de Flers, his relation, and M. de Sancerre, all apparently very assiduous and solicitous about me. I looked upon them in silence, my ideas being as yet very confused and unsettled; I was sorrowful, but without any determinate object of my grief. The sight of those by whom I thought myself beloved, touched me extremely; their slightest caresses affected me; those of M. de Sancerre gave me the most lively pleasure; I repeated with emotion every thing he said to me that was kind and consolatory; the sound of his voice enchanted me; if he took hold of my hand, I seized fast hold of his, and clapped it to my forehead, my lips, my

neck, and pressed it against my heart. I followed his motions with my looks, and whenever he turned to go away from me, my eyes were filled with tears.

During this state of childishness, I was always under the most fearful apprehensions. If a woman at any time came into my chamber, I discovered evident marks of terror; I hid my face, and could not be prevailed on to look at her till I had heard her speak. When I listened to her, I examined her with stupid terrified looks, and appeared under the utmost disquietude and constraint while she stayed. How artfully, how maliciously did M. Sancerre remind the Marshal afterwards of these circumstances, as the effect of a mind pre-occupied, a wandering imagination, and a heart deeply wounded!

wounded! How cruelly, how wickedly did he take an advantage of those emotions; the cause of which was so well known to him.

M. de Sancerre set out for the army before my recovery, which was long and distressful. In proportion as my ideas grew distinct, my sorrows increased; the assurance of not being beloved, the despair of gaining a heart prepossessed in favour of another, and for ever set against me; a gnawing jealousy constantly the same, and even undiversified by doubts and the disquietude of uncertainty; the necessity of concealing my sufferings, and the object of them; all this embittered my reflections, and rendered my situation extremely cruel. The natural selfishness of my sister would not permit me, in the

mean time, to seek any consolation in her friendship. The reflection that the discovery of M. de Sancerre's secret would double my fortune, would have given Madam de Thoré the prospect of a considerable reversion in favour of her children, which might have induced her to abuse my confidence. Left therefore to the reflections of my own mind, I sought in my principles, in my reason, in the indulgence due from me to my husband, for the means of subduing my heart, of relinquishing my just rights, of sacrificing my love and every sensation of tenderness, in order to convince an ungrateful man of the force of those very sentiments, of which I was willing to make a sacrifice for him. How dear to me was he even then ! O my friend, true love,

love, though offended, preserves its ardour a long time. It seems to regain new life from every wound it receives. Grief does not abate its activity ; but in a noble and generous mind, however susceptible, contempt alone is capable of depressing and extinguishing it.

Madam de Cezanes had, during my illness, made a journey into Provence; but was expected in Paris toward the middle of the autumn. Being determined never to see her again, but cautiously to avoid betraying any rupture between us, I came to a resolution not to see company. With this view, I gave out a design of applying myself to the finishing my studies ; a design from which the great world would too much divert

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me; my door accordingly ceased to be open to any body but our relations.

Madam de Cezanes remaining ignorant of the discovery of her intrigue, wrote me several letters, to none of which I returned any answer. On her arrival at Paris, she came to visit me, but I was denied to her, as to every body else: a circumstance of which she complained bitterly to M. de Sancerre; who was so far from being satisfied with the moderation I had shewn, that he joined in the resentment of his mistress. His ingratitude and injustice at length quite disgusted me, and caused that separation which hath given cause for so many and such different surmises.

The close of the campaign brought M. de Sancerre back to Paris. He appeared

peared to me again with a free and open air; neither blaming my retirement, nor enquiring into the motives of it. For some days after his return one would have thought that nothing had ever troubled the good understanding between us. His behaviour became the rule for mine; and as he never let slip a single expression tending to the recollection of an event, which we must nevertheless both so well remember, I appeared totally to have forgot it.

In a short time M. de Sancerre grew more cool; while on my part, I kept a painful and attentive reserve; stifling all such emotions as might betray my tenderness, and render it importunate. By degrees I began to look upon myself in my own house as a stranger, treated with

indif-

indifference but politeness. Time, patience and habit soften, at length, all our sufferings, or diminish our sensibility. I should perhaps have accustomed myself in time to bear my misfortune; but M. de Sancerre required too much, and compelled me at last to convince him that, although I was capable of restraining a just resentment, of preserving by my silence the reputation of a woman unworthy my notice, of keeping a secret essential to the interest of a man of whom I had so much reason to complain, this reasonable condescension, consistent with the strictest honour, did not render me capable of a mean and servile submission. These nice distinctions do not strike every mind: thus my husband imagined he had made me afraid of him; and that my silence was

was effect of his menaces. How, indeed, could he believe there was any generosity in me, when he never had any in himself. Give me leave, my friend, to say, it was impossible for his heart to judge of mine.

From his earliest infancy, M. de Sancerre had studied only to disguise his passions, and to appear different from what he really was. Destitute of principle, of sentiment, selfish, false, ungrateful; artifice and dissimulation were the only qualifications, he judged it necessary to acquire and improve. Obstinate in his caprices, constant in his vices, mysterious in his behaviour, he loved to injure and embroil friends, relations, and families; anxious only to find out secret intrigues, in order to make them public. Fond of

splendour,

splendour, yet covetous, he displayed his liberality and magnificence only when his behaviour could be noticed and admired by thousands. But never was his hand secretly opened for the relief of the indigent and unhappy. Incapable of any powerful attachment, the duration of his love for Madam de Cezanes was rather a weakness than a passion ; he made no sacrifice of any thing to his love, or at least he sacrificed only my happiness and his duty. This portrait may perhaps surprise you. But be assured, it is a just one. I should reproach myself were I to misrepresent a single feature.

My husband's death, time, and my present sentiments, make me capable of the greatest impartiality with regard to his character.

Two months had elapsed since his return, when a very slight circumstance enraged Madam de Cezanes anew against me, and induced M. de Sancerre to rob me cruelly of the esteem and friendship of Marshal de Tende, the only pleasure of my life, the only consolation of my afflicted heart.

In going one morning out of my apartment, I met the Marquis de Cezanes, who was going to M. de Sancerre. This respectable and worthy man politely complained of my long retirement, and of my coldness toward the Marchioness his wife; whose friendship for me he highly commended; expatiating on the goodness of her disposition, and acknowledged merit; and wondering I

should decline her visits, and shut my door against her.

It was with difficulty I suppressed the violent emotions I felt while he was speaking to me : this poor husband, so strongly prepossessed and so basely deceived, inspired me with the most tender compassion ; to which perhaps a retrospect to myself added more force. I sighed, and the tears started from my eyes ; at which he was surprized and affected. M. de Sancerre, coming out to receive him, seemed vexed and disturbed at seeing us in conversation together : I perceived it, and to make him easy, assured the Marquis that, if I should ever receive company again, Madam de Cezanes was the first person whose friendship I should be glad to cultivate ; but that at present my inclina-

inclinations led me to prefer retirement, and to enjoy the amusements it afforded me ; adding, that with this disposition, I ought to avoid the world, into which I should bring with me that melancholy and disgust it had given me.

These expressions being reported to Madam de Cezanes, raised strange suspicions in the mind of that restless and passionate woman. *I prefer retirement, and find a pleasure in it !* “ What pleasure, what amusement truly could *I find in retirement, unless such as M. de Sancerre must procure me ?*” On this suggestion, she set herself to observe him more narrowly. He appeared less warm, less solicitous to please ; she was astonished she did not remark his coldness sooner ; she thought she had dis-

vered a change in his behaviour to her ever since her journey and my long illness. In seeing me at the point of death, it was probable my husband's heart might have been moved to compassion, to repentance, perhaps to love ! Yes, doubtless he loved me, he adored me ; he forced me to live retired, in order to keep me entirely to himself ; it was jealousy, that made him shut me up from the eyes of the world. A *faithless* wretch that kept away from her house, to avoid her *just reproaches*, to shun the complaints of a woman who was *betrayed, sacrificed*, to avoid the *shame of avowing a ridiculous passion*, to which he had abandoned himself. You may read twenty letters from Madam de Cezanes to my husband wherein these

these expressions, and still stronger, are an hundred times repeated.

Had M. de Sancerre been of a more ingenuous disposition, he would have preferred a fair confession of the truth, to all those little artifices, by which he was embarrassed in endeavouring to keep it a secret from Madam de Cezanes: he would have told her their intrigue was known to me: determined however to appease her anger, and remove her suspicions, he took a method more difficult and less certain. He protested to her he would compel me to appear again in the world, to receive her visits, and to give her an opportunity of having the conduct of both cleared up.

But how was I to be brought to this servile complaisance? He could not directly exact it, without exposing himself

to long contestations; without running the risk of tiring out my good-nature; of exciting my resentment and laying himself open to a discovery which might make him lose the fruit of his long constraint and dissimulation. My excessive readiness to follow the advice of Marshal de Tende in every thing, induced him therefore to employ his mediation: but what villainous artifices did he not make use of! O my friend, it is with extreme reluctance I enter into these particulars; it is painful to me to retrace the baseness of a man who was once so dear to my heart.

M. de Sancerre began by affecting a melancholy in the presence of his uncle. He seemed pensive, restless, and full of inward chagrin.

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The Marshal soon observed and interested himself in his nephew's apparent change of humour ; he desired to know the cause, and pressed him to open his heart. M. de Sancerre, yielding by degrees to his solicitations, and artfully exciting his curiosity by distant hints and intimations, had, at length, the audacity to accuse me of being the cause of all his uneasiness.

He pretended to unfold what he called the mystery of my conduct ; which was represented as the effect of an intolerable caprice ; he complained of my temper, of an austerity in my natural disposition ; which nothing could soften ; his utmost complacency serving only to increase it. He described me as suspicious, distrustful, and averse to my own sex ; whom I shun-

Despairing

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ned.

ned, and wanted to keep away from my house; as being jealous of every woman I saw; looking upon them all as dangerous rivals. Among those who alarmed my fears, he had the assurance to mention Madam de Cezanes, and to support his odious imputations on the absurdity of a jealousy so ill-founded. My illness, the terror which the sight of a woman at that time put me into, my tears, my perseverance in living alone in my apartment, my perpetual languor, all was imputed to this pretended devouring inquietude. It was the bane of his happiness, the torment of an *affectionate heart*, by which I was *passionately loved*.

A long detail of pretended altercations, quarrels, and imaginary adventures, were thus imposed on the Marshal, and
persuaded

persuaded him, that I made his nephew very unhappy. He believed him to be sincere, susceptible and generous; why then should he doubt the truth of what he said? He himself observed, that my melancholy was not decreased since there turn of my husband; that I conversed indeed with him, but that his company seemed to give me no pleasure or concern; that when he saluted me in a tender manner, or addressed to me any obliging compliment, my emotions seemed rather to bear the marks of surprize than friendship or gratitude. My husband added a number of other particularities to these remarks of the Marshal's; and, the more to excite his compassion, affected even to reproach himself for having discovered such circumstances as could not fail to

afflict so affectionate a parent. He ought, he said, to have been silent, and never to have given him the displeasure of knowing that a woman, whom he had received at his hands with so much confidence in his choice, and with the hopes of being happy in her, was so far from answering his reasonable expectations, that she seemed destined to disturb his repose, to deprive him of all the pleasures of life, and in short to rob him of the greatest blessing on earth, that of constituting and sharing her happiness.

The Marshal, too ingenuous not to be credulous, was greatly affected at the pretended chagrin of his nephew. The silence I kept with respect to the cause of my melancholy, gave the appearance of truth to the accusations of M.
de

de Sancerre. Jealousy, an active and gloomy passion, often despised, and always detested, is always accompanied by shame and fear; one is offended at exciting it, and blushes to entertain it. Had my tears flowed from any other cause, should I have denied myself the consolation of complaining?

The Marshal assured his nephew he would keep the confidence reposed in him a profound secret, and engaged himself to induce me to give up a life of retirement so little conformable to my age. He promised that, at his desire, I should see again all those whom an unhappy caprice had led me to avoid: that he would conduct me himself to Madam de Cezanes; a woman so *respectable*, that deserved the greatest attention: that my good-

good-nature, my regard to my duty and my friendship for him whom I called my father, would soon restore me to the world, and to myself. He thought it would ; he had reason, my dear Count, to think so. Ah ! why was I laid under the cruel necessity of disappointing his expectations ; of wounding his heart by cruel denials, of appearing to want that respect and veneration which I really had for him ? How have I lamented the necessity of a disobedience so disagreeable to him !

It was at first with all the tenderness of friendship the Marshal endeavoured to bring me over to his design. But as I did not comprehend any thing of his insinuations, I could make no answer to them. His solicitations to prevail on me

to

to alter my conduct, not having the desired effect, he became importunate, and at length angry. He had all that kind of abruptness which is usually characteristic of extreme frankness; so that his impatience made him one day forget himself so far as to betray the secret entrusted to him by M. de Sancerre; when his complaints and reproaches discovered to me the contemptible artifice my husband had used. The falsehood, meanness and ingratitude of M. de Sancerre, were shocking to me. In a fit of indignation, I rose up hastily, and was going to my closet, strongly tempted to give the Marshal the letter of Madam de Cezanes, of that *friend*, whose virtues he so highly boasted, and whom he was so pressing for me to see, and to regard. A little reflection

tion, and my weakness for an ungrateful man, moderated this first emotion.

In giving me fresh reason for complaint, M. de Sancerre abused my goodness; but did he therefore eradicate the principles of it? Should I never have repented, had I exposed him? Can a generous mind long feel the pleasure of revenge? In breaking silence on this head, I should indeed have reconciled the Marshal to me, he would have punished the Count, and have honoured me again with his confidence and friendship. But would he have restored to me my former state, the pleasures of my first situation? could he have restored to me the heart of my husband? Alas! what if he had compelled him to abandon his mistress, to have treated me with more respect: would

would his reformation, either feigned or real, have made me happy! I had examined M. de Sancerre too nearly, I knew him too well, to have any hopes of being made happy either with or by him.

While my mind was taken up with these reflections, my silence, confusion and blushes entirely ruined me in the opinion of the Marshal, confirmed him in his error, and strengthened the accusations of my husband : I saw that now I should forfeit his affection, the only consolation I had left. O my dear Count, surely the most afflicting moment of our lives is that, in which one looks round in vain to meet the eyes of a friend.

I was dumb, but sigh'd deeply, while the tears flowed in abundance from my eyes. The prepossession of the Marshal

shut

shut his heart against pity ; he required the most ready obedience ; and peremptorily insisted on my naming the day, when I would consent to accompany him to Madam de Cezanes. No ! never, never, cried I ; if my life depended on taking so scandalous a step, I would not do it. This positive refusal drew on me the severest reproaches. He proceeded to treat me as a senseless visionary, as a woman blinded by a ridiculous and absurd passion ; as one whose odious disposition made her averse to society, and rendered her insupportable to her relations, and to the most obliging of husbands ; the manner in which all this was said, was a glaring proof how far good sense and good-nature may be perverted by anger.

The Marshal went out of my apartment
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ment in a fury; but, returning again immediately, Madam, said he, you shall either open your doors to those persons whose rank and character ought to entitle them to admittance, or you shall go into a convent; where you will be at liberty to indulge yourself in those extravagant imaginations, of which your head seems so full. I will give you a month to consider of the alternative, and make your choice.

So spirited a quarrel; such violent expressions, with the shocking alternative annexed, increased my chagrin to such a degree, as to deprive me of the power of concealing it. After this I was constantly in a state of depression and sorrow; being incapable of appearing in the world, in which they wanted to engage
me

me to live. The slightest mark of concern, even a simple question concerning the subject of my distress, made me weep most bitterly. The horrible falsehood of M. de Sancerre continually shocked me. Always obliging and solicitous to please me, in the presence of the few persons who saw us together, how could he be suspected as the author of my sufferings? He appeared indeed so extremely susceptible of them, that the contempt and disdain which he thence inspired me with, appeared in my looks, and often in my expressions.

People now began to say, I had a fixed aversion to him; they pitied him, and blamed me. Such an aversion, they said, was unnatural; they endeavoured to find out the cause; imagined that my senses were

were affected; it was impossible, they thought, that so profound a melancholy, so groundless an aversion, could proceed from any thing but a perversion of the understanding.

Destitute of friends and advice, and abandoned to my own reflections, I saw the time elapsed, in which I was to make my choice. I was willing to satisfy the Marshal, and perhaps even M. de Sancerre, by making every sacrifice they desired, with which my heart did not reproach me. I could readily consent to hurt, to afflict, myself: but ought I to debase myself so far, as to give up a point in which decency and honour were concerned? The convent, with which I was threatened, became, insensibly, the object of my consolation. In losing the

hopes of happiness, it is natural to seize on that of repose; but would not such a retreat appear compulsive? What, should I let the world imagine that M. de Sancerre had banished me from his house? By degrees my thoughts turned entirely on Mondelis. The scenes, in which I had passed my infancy in the most agreeable tranquility, presented themselves to my imagination as those of peace: there, I flattered myself I should find again that ease of mind and indifference of heart I so much wanted. In this, my friend, I was mistaken; that indifference is a blessing never to be enjoyed a second time; never can it be recovered in its full extent. When the heart has once engaged its affections, there is a painful, restless sentiment, a strange kind of regret, which mixes

mixes itself with the certainty of being beloved no longer, and exposes it to the danger of loving again.

My mind being entirely taken up with the desire of retiring to Mondelis, and fixing my residence there, I ventured to fix on the only means that could engage M. de Sancerre to comply with this my ardent inclination. I thought myself justifiable indeed, for once, in employing artifice, and making use of Madam de Cezanes' letter, to help me out of that unhappy situation, to which this daring woman was pleased to reduce me. I was very far from meditating any low or cruel revenge on her; but did my husband know me enough not to fear me? Perhaps if I threatened him, and shewed myself ready to repel insult by insult, I

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might

might be able to free myself from his oppression and tyranny.

After mature deliberation, I wrote to him, and enclosed in my letter a copy of that of Madam de Cezanes. At the same time, to leave him no hope of obliging me by force to give up this proof of their secret intelligence, I set out early in the morning for Tresnel; determined never to come out of the convent again, if the answer I received from my husband did not answer my expectation.

The following is a copy of my letter.

*Letter from Madam de Sancerre to her
husband.*

" Art and cunning, Sir, do not always direct people with the most security : this I have learned from your conduct. You

risk too much in abusing my good nature, and ought to think, when I have it in my power to hurt you, and avenge myself, that it is a crisis in which generosity yields to the necessity of a just defence; a crisis, at which one ceases to devote one's self to the interest of a man, capable of enjoying the benefit of the greatest sacrifices without valuing, or acknowledging them.

You have deprived me of the only friend, whose affection yielded support to my dejected heart: you have prejudiced him against me, have robbed me of his esteem and protection. You flatter yourself he will no longer listen to my complaints, no longer be moved by my tears: you rest securely on the success of your artifices, and fear nothing. You

would subject me to the severest terms; would give Madam de Cezanes the cruel pleasure of looking down upon me in the most mortifying state of grief and humiliation. In this, however, your confidence deceives you. Irritated by her impudence and your assurance, mistress of her reputation and your fortune, it is in my power to cover that woman with confusion, and deprive you of all the emoluments you hope for, from a long course of deceit and dissimulation.

Too sincere to hide from you the extreme contempt your character inspires me with, I shall be very plain with you. I never will live with you again, Sir. The daughter of the Count de Dammartin was not born to be your slave; to be subjected to mean and base compliances:

enjoy

enjoy freely all the advantages you may reap from the *permission* given you by Madam de Cezanes to marry *Adelaide*: dispose as you will of my fortune; the income of the estate at Mondelis, with the sum allotted for my amusements, will be sufficient for my maintenance. The utmost of my wishes, is to pass the remainder of my days on that estate: if you agree to this, I will forget the fatal ties that unite us; destitute of all curiosity or concern about your future behaviour, I shall be with respect to you, as if I no longer existed.

To add some influence to this request, I inclose the copy of a letter to you from Madam de Cezanes. The original is not in your possession, as you will be convinced of, on looking for it. Deposited

by myself in very sure hands, your refusal or compliance will determine the use I shall make of it. If you hesitate to consent to my desire, if you agree not to my demand this very day, the Marquis de Cezanes shall receive from me to-morrow this proof of his wife's fidelity; and Marshal de Tende shall know whether he hath most reason to complain of me or you.

As you have it in your power to avoid so disagreeable an ecclaircissement, you will also be capable of inventing excuses for my retirement to Mondelis. An eternal silence on my part about you and Madam de Cezanes, will permit you to charge this separation on my peculiarity of temper. I give you my word, that I shall never contravert your falsest imputations,

tations, on condition that they do not attack my morals. I expect your answer, on which I shall regulate my conduct; being determined not to go out of this house till I am satisfied of your intentions; and ready to confirm my orders in regard to Madam de Cezanes' letter, or to revoke them, if my request be complied with.

To leave you no cause of objection, Sir, I shall inform you of the measures I have already taken. Having had a consultation on the present declining state of my heath, the physicians advise me to try the effect of my native air. Madam de Flers will leave Tresnel, in order to accompany me to Mondelis. In living under the eye of one of your nearest relations, a respectable woman, dear to

Marshal de Tende, and distinguished by all your family, I shall still appear, Sir, to depend entirely on you: and my residence there will be looked upon only as the natural consequence of the distaste, I have so long taken against the world."

Having sent away this letter, my mind was extremely agitated during a suspence of three hours. I began to repent the rash step I had taken, and to be filled with fears and apprehensions, when the following answer was brought me from M. de Sancerre.

Count de Sancerre's Answer to the foregoing Letter.

Madam,

" You will always be mistress of your own actions, your goodness and virtues,
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the attachment due to your merit and my undoubted respect for you, should give you reason to expect every thing of me you can desire. Unhappy that I am disagreeable to you, and afflicted as I am at the step you are determined to take, I nevertheless cannot oppose your desires. I should never have deprived myself of the happiness of seeing you, had not you positively assured me, you desire to part from me. At all times, Madam, and on every occasion, I shall approve whatever you think expedient ; whatever can contribute to the repose, or happiness of your life : in the mean time you are at full liberty to pursue the design you are pleased to communicate."

This

This consent in form, which I so much desired, mitigated my chagrin. I hastened the preparatives of my journey, and look'd upon my departure as the end of all my sufferings, as the end of a tender and unhappy passion. I flattered myself, that I should lose at Mondelis, the feeling of those sensations which induced me to retire. But, alas! I experienced in my solitude that, tho' absence may diminish the force of hatred, it often increases that of love.

M. de Sancerre setting out about this time for the army, his absence admitted of my passing some months at Mondelis, without giving any suspicion of the cause of it to Marshal de Tende. He saw nothing that could give him reason to look upon this journey, as the commencement

of

of an eternal separation between his nephew and me: on the contrary he hoped it might tend to the restoration of my health, and the recovery of my spirits. In taking my leave of this venerable relation, I abandoned myself to the most cutting grief; never, never shall I see him more, said I weeping. I have received his last embrace. The idea, which I left with him of my character, and that, which he was afterwards confirmed in, afflicted me to the heart. Do not hate me, Sir, cried I; bathing his hands with tears, my dear father, do not hate me; for you, I shall ever love and respect! It was with the greatest reluctance I could leave him; nor shall ever recollect without regret the pain it gave him. To spare M. de

Sancerre

Sancerre the trouble of dissembling regret, and displaying unnecessary demonstrations of sorrow, I anticipated the hour fixed for my departure, and went away without seeing him.

During my journey, I kept up the hopes of being happy on my arrival at Mondelis. My expectations, however, were cruelly disappointed. That spot, so delightful in my infancy, presented to my eyes only a vast and barren desert. It recalled to my mind the sorrowful remembrance of that affectionate mother, whose tenderness and solicitude rendered it formerly so pleasing. Oh, my dear Count, how necessary to me, at this time, was her prudent advice ! In such a distressful and embarrassing situation, how consolatory are the suggestions and coun-

sel

sel of a sensible and experienced friend, interested in directing us safely, and in pointing out those rocks and quicksands, which our passions conceal from us. What a misfortune is it to be abandoned too early in life, to one's own guidance ! to constant doubt and hesitation ! to the fear of going astray in the pursuit of one's own inclinations ; ignorant, whether they arise from pride or a natural and reasonable sentiment ? In venturing to consult nobody ; in listening only to my own resentment, I took it into my head, to arm myself against M. de Sancerre, with that letter, which accident put into my hands. In keeping his intrigue, and the meanness of his character a secret, I thought I fulfilled all the engagements I lay under to him : but, perhaps.

perhaps I owed him more? The tie which united us, perhaps required an entire renunciation of my own passion and interests, a blind submission to his will: perhaps I was not entirely free from blame: but what obligation, my friend, is there in nature or equity, that requires our sex to support for ever so cruel a yoke? How, and why doth this same chain so extend itself, as to lie so loosely and lightly on the one sex, when it binds so close, and bears so hard, on the other?

But here, I put an end to my letter. What I have farther to say is but little interesting; I shall nevertheless write to you as usual. Adieu,

and let me

LET.

L E T T E R XVII.

I Received your two letters, which have dissipated my inquietude. I am pleased to find I have not wounded your heart by a recital, which I was so averse to make you. But, my dear Count, what a strange confession is this of yours? What reflections hath it given rise to? And could you be acquainted with the falsehood of Madam de Cezanes, with the indecency of her behaviour, and yet respect her? Her death could affect you with grief, excite your tears, and you can speak to me of her with tenderness, with sorrow! Good God! if the tears of a man of probity are shed to the memory of a worthless contemptible

VOL. I. O woman,

woman, what is to be the tribute paid to virtue? What homage, what shall be rendered to modesty and candour? If we except M. de Sancerre, whose intrigue commenced, during your residence at Malta, you say, you knew all the *favoured* lovers of Madam de Cezanes. You yourself, was doubtless one of the number. I wish, my friend, you had less regretted the death of that woman: you ought not to lament her: No, indeed you ought not. But I will suppress the inclination. I have to quarrel with you, on this head, and proceed, in what you call *my history*.

I shall not trouble you with the circumstances of my solitary life, nor with the persecutions I underwent for a long time. You know, that the Marshal de

Tende,

Tende, my Sister, and all those who were thought to have any influence over me, endeavoured in vain to prevail on me, to return to Paris. Constant in my refusal, nothing could overcome my resolution. In the mean time M. de Sancerre affected the most lively sorrow; he complained every where of being the aversion of a woman he adored. His friends partook of his pretended chagrin, and the Marshal determined to compensate him for so unhappy an union, by the gift of his whole fortune. Six months after he had thus confirmed my husband his heir, he died; sincerely regretted perhaps by her only whose disobedience had excited his hate and resentment.

As the most extraordinary events engage but a short time the attention of a

world, that is fond of novelties, I had not been a year at Mondelis, before I was forgotten by the relations of M. de Sancerre, neglected by my own, and reduced solely to the friendship of Madam de Flers. In compassionating my misfortunes, she was tender of entering into the cause of them. If my conduct with regard to M. de Sancerre, did not appear to be consistent with the sentiments she knew me possessed of, she was still as discreet and susceptible, and did not press to be let into the secret. It was from her I learned the secret history of Madam de Cezanes's amours; the Countess de Flers being possessed of a very circumstantial account of her intrigues. It seems one of the nephews of this lady, who had been encouraged and jilted

jilted by the Marchioness, took the pains, for a considerable time, to watch her motions, to bribe her woman, to get into the confidence of her lovers, and to come at the knowledge of their places of rendeyous. Being witty and vindictive, he had reduced his observations into the form of a memoir, with a design to have it handed about among his friends: But, Madam de Flers persuaded him from such an atrocious piece of vengeance, and got hold of the copy. Your name was found in it; but M. de Sancerre was not mentioned.

The uniformity of my manner of life,
the care of embellishing my retreat, the
contempt which I had for the character
of my husband, my distance from every
object, tending to revive a passion I

ought to blush for, together with the simple and various amusements of the country; all had contributed, with time, greatly to calm the agitations of my heart, when Madam de Martigues came down to add the charms of her agreeable gaiety, to those happy dawnings of tranquility so vainly sought for in the world. Believe me, my friend, we taste only the appearance of it at Paris; No, I am not so easy here as I was at Mondelis.

Count de Martigues, retired from Court and the service, was come to settle at Montfernai, an estate contiguous to mine. Having been scarcely two months married, he was in haste to deprive the world of the young and charming companion he had espoused. M. de Meri, uncle to Madam de Miranda, and guardian

dian to Mademoiselle de Marsei, imagined that in securing the fortune of his ward, he must of course provide for her happiness. Under this mistake, he had married her to a man, whose disposition was the most incompatible, of any in the world, to the gaiety and vivacity of hers. M. de Martigues, tho' possessed of estimable qualities, solid virtues and real merit, was agreeable to nobody. The gravity of his looks, the austerity of his principles, an exact but rigid sense of justice, which treats clemency as a weakness, a gloomy brow, an imperious tone of voice, a sufficient acrimony in dispute, all made against him, and induced people rather to shun him, than to examine him enough, to find out the goodness of his heart or the probity of his sentiments.

You may imagine how ill the spirit and fire of Madam de Martigues agreed with the gravity of her husband. Deprived of all the amusements she was fond of, contradicted in almost every thing she had a mind for, however insignificant or trifling ; adored indeed, but subjected to every constraint, ought we to be surprised at her backwardness to enter into new engagements ? In vain doth Count de Piennes endeavour to remove her apprehensions of the danger ; slavery and a husband are ideas that with her always go together : it is not her levity of temper we ought to accuse ; it is her actual experience that makes her so difficult to be prevailed on.

Madam de Martigues, having been educated in the convent, where the Coun-
tess

cess de Flers had resided since her being a widow, came to see her at Mondelis; She had entertained a notion, that I must be a very extraordinary person, and was surprised to find me only a peaceable melancholy woman. By degrees, we contracted a tender friendship for each other; M. de Martigues visiting me often, and, when he made little excursions round about the country, leaving the Countess with me at Mondelis. At his death, which afflicted me, and happened about two years before that of M. de Sancerre, Madam de Martigues, being rich and at liberty, ran away to Paris: and I never expected to see her again; but, having a truer friendship for me than I imagined, I saw her soon again at Mondelis; bringing with

with her Madam de Miranda, whom she had taken from her convent, and wanted to conceal from the search and authority of M. de Meri. A widow at eighteen years of age, and limited to a moderate and uncertain dowry, destitute of all support, but from the affection of her uncle, Madam de Miranda had already a tenderness for Terme; on which account she refused a wealthy match proposed to her, and exposed herself to be disinherited by this imprudent step, to which Madam de Martigues had advised her.

The situation of this young and pretty widow rendered her as interesting, as the sweetness of her natural temper and disposition rendered her agreeable. Being her uncle's ward, and brought up with her from her infancy, Madam de Martigues

tigues was vastly fond of her; and I thought myself happy that she had made choice of Mondelis as an asylum for her friend: from whom you know, since that time, I have never been separated. Madam de Martigues was almost constantly going backwards and forwards between Mondelis and Paris; the pleasure of the town, for which she had so great an avidity, being frequently sacrificed to that of giving us proofs of her sincere friendship: but Madam de Miranda never quitted Mondelis without me.

What have I to say more, my dear Count? After the death of M. de Sancerre, you came to Mondelis; my affairs called me to Paris: I appeared again in the world, and was received with

with apparent pleasure. As I was then but two and twenty years of age, Madam de Flers consented to spend three years with me. Six months ago she desired to retire to her convent, to give herself up entirely to pious exercises. You know with what regret I parted from her; tho' I see her often. O my friend, the tranquillity of her manner of life, her peace of mind, sometimes excite my envy. There are moments in which I am almost ready to quit every thing in the world, and shut myself up with her. Are we not happy when we are easy? You will ask me, perhaps, if I am not *easy*? No, indeed, I am not. I know not what kind of uneasiness; a strange inquietude—Adieu, Adieu. Burn, what you have here occasioned me to write.

L E T-

L E T T E R XVIII.

Paris.

YOU have received the letter of the amiable Countess de Termes, and that of her happy husband : Madam de Martigues tells you of all the magnificent entertainments of le Fere: I shall therefore, say nothing to you of what passed at a festival so long and ardently wished for. It will doubtless be the subject of conversation at your return ; the characters of the new-married couple convince they will long take a pleasure in recollecting it.

We arrived here at Madam de Comminges' ; where the Marquis de Montalais was waiting for us.

M. de

M. de Comminges, however, coming to us first, took a fancy to conceal him a while, and to ask our permission to introduce to us a country relation of his, a good kind of man, he said, but a little weak, and sometimes troublesome. We looked at him, and bowed assent with a bad grace enough: Madam de Martigues in particular was just beginning to scold him, when she perceived it was the Marquis, and altered her tone to exclamations of joy. We supped together chearfully, and should have parted at midnight; but the clock struck three before we began to consider if it was not growing something late.

The ending of your last letter will bear a very singular interpretation. I imagine it was written without attention or de-

sign ; and yet the oftner I read it over — What expressions are these that have dropped from your pen ! You cannot have perceived the force of them ; it would be ridiculous to suppose you had any such ideas.—I don't know, but you alarm me about the situation of my heart ; if I were less certain.—*Troubled ! agitated !* Is it possible ? I appear *troubled* ? I ! doubtless I have my transient disgusts, my temporary uneasinesses as well as other people ; but do these deserve *my serious reflections* ? I will make no more reflections, my friend ; the more I think, the more melancholy I am.

Really your letter disturbs me. My stile, you say, is more *grave*, my temper is *altered* ! The *fluctuation of my mind* leads you to doubt the *peace of my heart* :

I have

I have forbid you, *positively forbid* you, to ask me about the *object of my sincere esteem*! What am I to understand by all this? When did I express this so *positive* prohibition? I don't remember a word of it.

A line or two after, you ask me what I think of the Marquis de Montalais. Either you are mighty absent, or don't read my letters. I have said every thing it is possible for me to say about the Marquis: my sentiments with respect to him cannot vary. But I will not give credit to this malicious turn of yours; I hate all finesse, and should reproach myself for suspecting it in a friend.

Madam de Termes is fatigued to death with visits. She sends for me every minute to her apartment; I must go and help

help her to receive and dismiss a crowd
of impertinents. Adieu. I am a little
angry with you; but I don't esteem you
a jot the less.

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P

L E T.

LETTER XIX.

YES, people are in the right to think so, and say so; Madam de Martigues is an inconsiderate, imprudent creature: she has the strangest ideas, the most extravagant projects! I am really angry with her, as well as with some body else, and, perhaps too, with myself! I went yesterday to her house, where I found her alone. After a moment's conversation, she put a billet into my hand, which she had just received from M. de Montalais. There, says she, read that, and tell me if you think any thing can be better expressed. I took it, run it over, approved it, and laid it again on the chimney-piece. Madam de Martigues looked

ed at me attentively. *You must own it is well written.* Very well. *An easy stile!* Yes. *Something tender and interesting!* Here I interrupted her, and turned the discourse on another subject. *So very indifferent, Madam!* I began to shew a little surprize. Why, Madam? To what does this discourse tend? *And you will not see any thing in this billet!* What should I see in it? *That the Marquis is passionately in love, and deserves at least to be pitied.* In love! he! in love! with whom? pray! Guess. With you undoubtedly. Guess again. With Madam de Termes? Not be. With Madam de Themines? No. Then it must be Madam de Thianges. Ob! No. With Madam de Comminges then. Ob! my God, No.

Wearied out with mistaking, I would guess no more, but called her lapdog to me, and began to play with him : on which she began to be vexed and to scold me. *So agreeable a man to make no impression on me, not even to excite my curiosity!* Really this was carrying insensibility to a blameable degree of excess. But, pray, said I to her, very mildly, for I saw she began to grow warm, is it so very important to your friend, that I should be informed of the emotions of his heart ? Why should I want to know the object of his affections ? If this be the secret that has been so long concealed.—*And you have not discovered this secret ? No.* Oh ! how you fib ! Do you think so ? How is it possible you should not have read in his heart,

*heart, that it is you he is in love with ?
Me ! You.*

I was struck dumb and confounded at this abrupt and indiscreet declaration. I felt the blood glow in my cheeks ; my eyes involuntarily looked downwards, my heart fluttered, and I was in a violent agitation from surprize as well as anger. Yes, anger. I was enraged against Madam de Martigues. Why should she betray the confidence put in her by her friend ? Why embarrass me by so imprudent a declaration ?

My silence offended her ; on which she spoke, answered herself, rated me, and at length assumed that agreeable pretty childish manner that so well becomes her. Taking both my hands into one of hers, and with the other lifting up my head.

Come, my friend, said she, let us talk together without pouting and being angry. The Marquis de Montalais is a charming figure of a man, is not he? I don't say to the contrary. Has not he a great deal of wit? A good deal. Talents? Yes. Noble and elevated sentiments? I confess it. A prudence in his conduct? So they say. An uncommon degree of sincerity? I believe it. Is he not held in universal esteem? Undoubtedly. Has he not yours? I own he has. Well, Madam, and why then should his having a regard for you give offence? Why do you refuse to indulge the agreeable idea of one day sharing that regard? Of making a man happy, who is so deserving of your heart and hand? Does the merit of any of the parties, you are solicited to accept, come up to that of this?

Sharing

Sharing his regard ! said I. Do you forget that he is—*Married, you was going to say.* *A mighty pretty obstacle, his wife truly ! How ! In the first place it was a forced marriage.* Is that a reason.—*Then she is a cripple ! What of that ? Ill-natur-ed, pedantic, silly.*—But—*Ugly, fractious, peevish.*—But she is—a troublesome, stu-pid, termagant idiot, that I have quarrel-led with.—But she is his wife.—Oh, as to that.—What do you mean by, as to that ? Why, that is but for a little while: that will be at an end.

What a thought ! *A thought ! Madam,* replied she gravely, I don't speak at ran-dom: that woman has the madness to think of having children; she has a pas-sion for it; but she will die of her third; she has been told of it. The poor Mar-

quis begged of her to preserve her life ; but she rejected his entreaties, and despised the threatened danger : in six months time we shall be rid of her. She is as thin as a lath, has got a vile cough, and can hardly stand upright. I know, I am sure, she will die. My doctor, who is also hers, assures me of it : I will take upon me to answer for it, she will never recover.

What levity ! what absurdity ! can any thing be more blind and inconsiderate ! She insisted on my giving her my word ; nothing less than a positive promise ; and if Madam de Thianges had not come into the room, we should certainly have quarrelled. What, upon the assurance of her physician, shall I go to accustom my heart to employ itself on a future

future prospect of what may never come to pass? Shall I go to promise? To engage myself? Shall the misfortune of a woman, I have no reason to complain of, be the foundation on which I am to build my happiness? I should think myself cruel and unjust; I should despise myself if I were capable of thus indulging hopes which I ought not to conceive or encourage. Adieu, my friend, I have repeated this long and ridiculous conversation, at the risk of tiring you: but, in truth, my mind was so full of it, that it was impossible for me to pursue any other subject.

One o'clock in the morning.

M. de Montalais supped here; I observed him with a good deal of attention. I know not how Madam de Martigues knows

knows that he is in love, *passionately in love!* I did not perceive in his eyes anything of that languor that is characteristic of real tenderness. I observed vivacity, fire, joy; but do these resemble passion? Love, my friend, is sad and melancholy; it closes the heart against all those pleasures it does not bestow.

LET-

L E T T E R XX.

HOW! two couriers arrived without one letter from you! Are you sick, are you angry, are you determined also to give me uneasiness? Good God! how tedious and afflictiong is your absence! You know not how earnestly I wish for you; how much I want to repose the secrets of my heart in yours. I form a hundred projects, a thousand fantastical schemes; sometimes I am tempted to leave Paris; the world only tires and confounds without amusing me. I want to go to Mondelis, yes, I want to go sadly; and what hinders me? Such a journey would seem a little extraordinary in this severe

Severe season of the year: but no matter, I believe I shall go.

In fact, my dear Count, I feel an earnest desire to revisit that peaceful habitation, to ramble about the groves, whose solitude is necessary to calm the perturbation of my mind. For some time since, every thing has displeased me; I have no longer any taste for the pleasures of a society in which I so highly delighted. My sister begins to plague me again with her troublesome commendations of the Marquis de Limeuil; whom she protects and encourages to persecute me. I hear talk of nothing but alliances, titles, settlements. Madam de Comminges supports the pretensions of the Count de Roye: Marshal de Termes pays court to me in favour of the Chevalier: a woman's having

a large fortune gives rise to a number of projects against her liberty. Madam de Martigues also is for having me married too: though her views, it must be owned, are somewhat distant.

She ought to be silent, and never open her lips to me again on so idle a subject. I cannot indeed put much confidence in what she said: she might possibly mistake the warmth of friendship for a passion, a mere preference in esteem for love. I can believe no other. No, I will believe no other. But, if it were so, why mention it to me? Imprudent creature! Do you know that from that moment, the presence of the Marquis embarrasses and lays me under a constraint. I am afraid to hear what he says to me, or to answer him. Madam de Martigues.

tigues has destroyed all the pleasure I used to take in seeing him. Adieu, but write to me. Can you neglect the most affectionate of your friends, and at such a time as this?

LET-

L E T T E R XXI.

YOUR friend hath dissipated my quietude. I was delighted to hear that an unforeseen journey only had interrupted our correspondence. I received him as a man whom you esteem, and shall carry him to night to sup with Madam de Martigues.

I must ask your advice, my dear Count, and I ask it with an intent to follow it. Give it me, therefore, in the sincerity of your heart. I have a scruple, which arises perhaps from too much delicacy, or perhaps may be just and reasonable. Examine the proposition and determine the conduct I ought to pursue.

Doth

Doth it become me to receive at my house, and to see constantly at the houses of others, a man suspected of having a passion for me, which our circumstances make highly improper? Can the Marquis de Montalais have in confidence disclosed his own secret? Or is it, only guessed at? If Madam de Martigues has been so penetrating as to discover it, will not others be as clear-sighted as she? Love me! with what hope or view can he attach himself to me? Shall I have nothing to reproach myself with, if I continue therefore to keep up an intimacy with him. Oh, my good God! what happened to me yesterday, proves to the contrary.

I was at the house of Madam de Comminges, when the servant brought in the name

name of the Marchioness de Montalais. At hearing her mentioned, I felt a secret emotion, which the sight of her augmented. I recalled to my mind the conversation of Madam de Martigues, and was much confused; it appeared to me that I somehow did wrong with regard to that woman, neglected perhaps, and perhaps neglected on my account. When she spoke, I could not help being interested for her, and feeling a tender compassion for her situation; I found myself even inclined to lament, to serve and respect her.

She has nothing in her person absolutely shocking; her present condition even deprives her of one advantage; that is a good shape, and perhaps a graceful one. She has a noble, tho' a frigid

air; then she is not positively ugly; one may be soon reconciled to her physiognomy: she has white teeth, and when she smiles she does not look so very disagreeable. She told Madam de Comminges, that she found herself very much indisposed, that she saw little company, and should not go out during the remainder of the winter. She looked at me pretty attentively, and paid me a genteel compliment; but I was so absent that I hardly know if I returned it.

With what levity doth Madam de Martigues speak of this sick and unfortunate woman, yes, I say, unfortunate. She is excessively fond of her husband; her fondness perhaps is troublesome to him? Poor woman, she is indeed unfortunate! The Marquis de Montalais treats her,

it is true, with great respect; but what is respect to a heart susceptible of love? Oh, my friend, there are very few women whose situation is to be envied. Adieu, answer directly and explicitly to the former part of my letter; give me your opinion.

I have a great mind to go to Monde lis. But how shall I leave all my friends? Ought we to study only our own interest and convenience? Have others no right to require any thing of us?

LETTER XXII.

MAKE you a confident! say you? I have made you a confident! I! Is it possible? When? And in what? You have long expected it, and desire to know *all*, you will then speak to me without *reserve*, but dare not as yet venture to give advice dictated by the most tender friendship; the knowledge of my happy disposition hardly encourages you to speak on so delicate a subject, for fear of shewing a zeal, which may appear to me *officious* and *indiscreet*. Good God! how you frighten me. This, *take care, Madam, take care!* terrifies me to death. My heart flutters, and I look round me to see where this precipice lies, of which I stand on

on the brink, and am just ready to fall. How could any one frighten his best friend in this manner, and then be silent, and finish such a broken, singular, strange letter, by enigmatical reflections and a needless apology *for the motive that engages you, that induces you.*—What does it engage you to do? Is it reasonable to end so abruptly? I cannot forgive you this ill-timed *respect*, these *frivolous apprehensions*: for the first time, you have made me experience that it is possible for you to disoblige me.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.

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